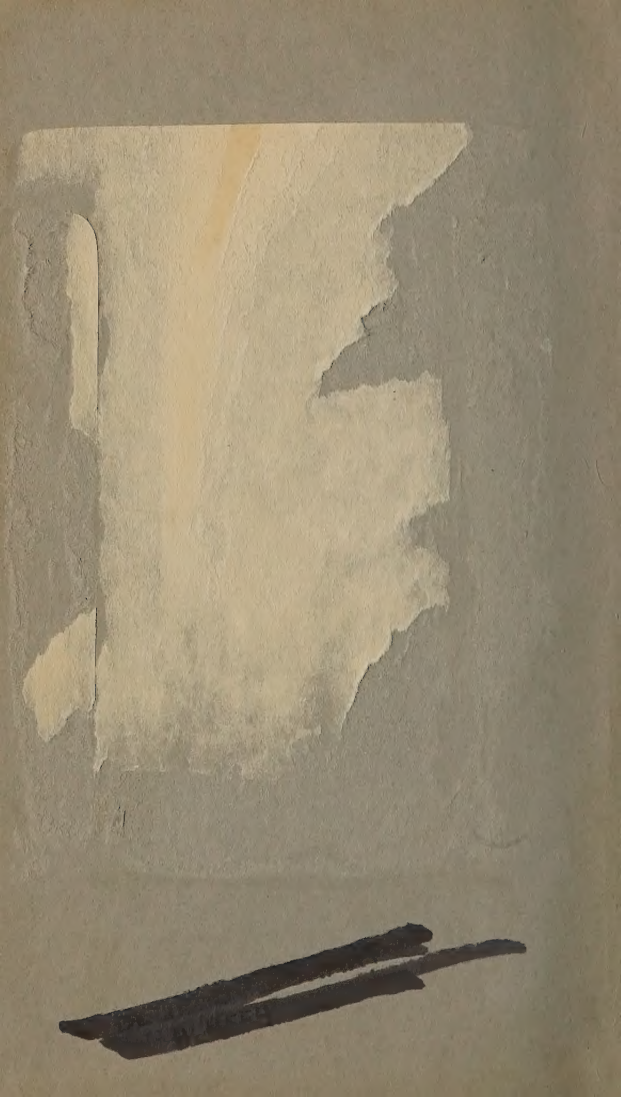
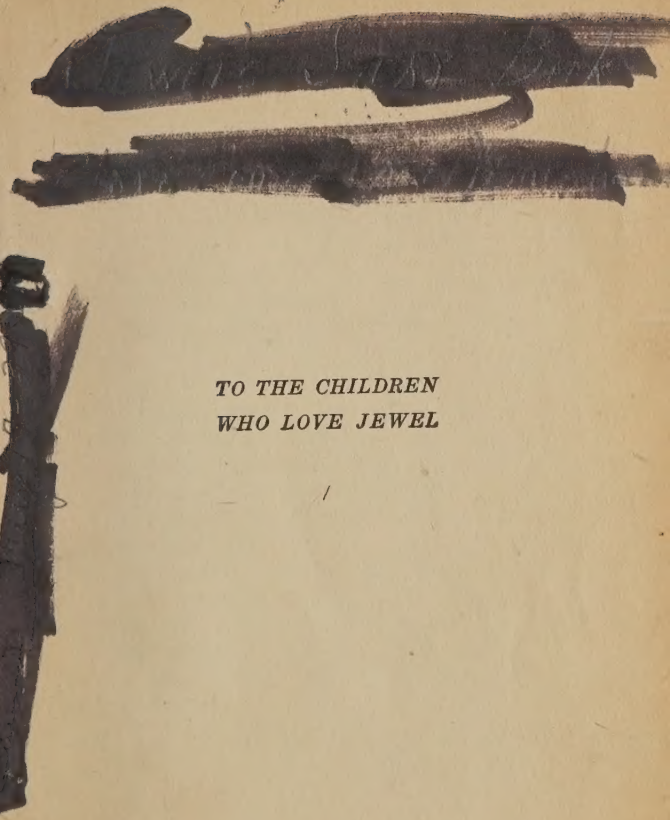


JEWEL'S STORY BOOK

by

MRS. CLARA LOUISE (ROOT) BURNHAM



TO THE CHILDREN
WHO LOVE JEWEL

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JEWEL'S STORY BOOK

CHAPTER I

OVER THE 'PHONE

Mrs. Forbes, Mr. Evringham's housekeeper, answered the telephone one afternoon. She was just starting to climb to the second story and did not wish to be hindered, so her "hello" had a somewhat impatient brevity.

"Mrs. Forbes?"

"Oh," with a total change of voice and face, "is that you, Mr. Evringham?"

"Please send Jewel to the 'phone."

"Yes, sir."

She laid down the receiver, and moving to the foot of the stairs called loudly, "Jewel!"

"Drat the little lamb!" groaned the housekeeper. "If I was only sure she was up there; I've got to go up anyway. *Jewel!*" louder.

"Ye—es!" came faintly from above, then a door opened. "Is somebody calling me?"

Mrs. Forbes began to climb the stairs deliberately while she spoke with energy. "Hurry down, Jewel. Mr. Evringham wants you on the 'phone."

"Goody, goody!" cried the child, her feet pattering on the thick carpet as she flew down one flight and

then passed the housekeeper on the next. "Perhaps he is coming out early to ride."

"Noth[illegible]e less," remarked Mrs. Forbes dryly as she mounted.

Jewel flitted to the telephone and picked up the receiver.

"Hello, grandpa, are you coming out?" she asked.

"No, I thought perhaps you would like to come in."

"In where? Into New York?"

"Yes."

"What are we going to do?" eagerly.

Mr. Evringham, sitting at the desk in his private office, his head resting on his hand, moved and smiled. His mind pictured the expression on the face addressing him quite as distinctly as if no miles divided them.

"Well, we 'll have dinner, for one thing. Where shall it be? At the Waldorf?"

Jewel had never heard the word.

"Do they have Nesselrode pudding?" she asked, with keen interest. Mrs. Forbes had taken her in town one day and given her some at a restaurant.

"Perhaps so. You see I 've heard from the Steamship Company, and they think that the boat will get in this evening."

"Oh, grandpa! grandpa! *grandpa!*"

"Softly, softly. Don't break the 'phone. I hear you through the window."

"When shall I come? Oh, oh, oh!"

"Wait, Jewel. Don't be excited. Listen. Tell Zeke to bring you in to my office on the three o'clock train."

"Yes, grandpa. Oh, please wait a minute. Do you

think it would be too extravagant for me to wear my silk dress?"

"No, let 's be reckless and go the whole figure."

"All right," tremulously.

"Good-by."

"Oh, grandpa, wait. Can I bring Anna Belle?" but only silence remained.

Jewel hung up the receiver with a hand that was unsteady, and then ran through the house and out of doors, leaving every door open behind her in a manner which would have brought reproof from Mrs. Forbes, who had begun to be Argus-eyed for flies.

Racing out to the barn, she appeared to 'Zekiel in the harness room like a small whirlwind.

"Get on your best things, Zeke," she cried, hopping up and down; "my father and mother are coming."

"Is this an india rubber girl?" inquired the coachman, pausing to look at her with a smile. "What train?"

"Three o'clock. You 're going with me to New York. Grandpa says so; to his office, and the boat 's coming to-night. Get ready quick, Zeke, please. I 'm going to wear my silk dress."

"Hold on, kid," for she was flying off. "I 'm to go in town with you, am I? Are you sure? I don't want to fix up till I make Solomon look like thirty cents and then find out there 's some misdeal."

"Grandpa wants you to bring me to his office, that 's what he said," returned the child earnestly. "Let 's start real *soon!*"

Like a sprite she was back at the house and running upstairs, calling for Mrs. Forbes.

The housekeeper appeared at the door of the front room, empty now for two days of Mrs. Evringham's trunks, and Jewel with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes told her great news.

Mrs. Forbes was instantly sympathetic. "Come right upstairs and let me help you get ready. Dear me, to-night! I wonder if they 'll want any supper when they get here."

"I don't know. I don't know!" sang Jewel to a tune of her own improvising, as she skipped ahead.

"I don't believe they will," mused Mrs. Forbes. "Those customs take so much time. It seems a very queer thing to me, Jewel, Mr. Evringham letting you come in at all. Why, you 'll very likely not get home till midnight."

"Won't it be the most *fun!*" cried the child, dancing to her closet and getting her checked silk dress.

"I guess your flannel sailor suit will be the best, Jewel."

"Grandpa said I might wear my silk. You see I 'm going to dinner with him, and that 's just like going to a party, and I ought to be very particular, don't you think so?"

"Well, don't sit down on anything dirty at the wharf. I expect you will," returned Mrs. Forbes with a resigned sigh, as she proceeded to unfasten Jewel's tight, thick little braids.

"Just think what a short time we 'll have to miss cousin Eloise," said the child. "Day before yesterday she went away, and now to-morrow my mother 'll braid my hair." She gave an ecstatic sigh.

"If that 's all you wanted your cousin Eloise for —

to braid your hair — I guess I could get to do it as well as she did."

"Oh, I loved cousin Eloise for everything and I always shall love her," responded the child quickly. "I only meant I did n't have to trouble you long with my hair."

"I think I do it pretty well."

"Yes, indeed you do — just as *tight*. Do you remember how much it troubled you when I first came? and now it 's so much different!"

"Yes, there are a whole lot of things that are much different," replied Mrs. Forbes. "How long do you suppose you 'll be staying with us now, Jewel?"

The child's face grew sober. "I don't know, because I don't know how long father and mother can stay."

"You 'll think about this room where you 've lived so many weeks, when you get back to Chicago."

"Yes, I shall think about it lots of times," said the little girl. "I knew it would be a lovely visit at grandpa's, and it has been."

She glanced up in the mirror toward the housekeeper's face and saw that the woman's lips were working suspiciously and her eyes brimming over.

"You won't be lonely, will you, Mrs. Forbes?" she asked; "because grandpa says you want to live with Zeke in the barn this summer while he shuts up the house and goes off on his vacation."

"Oh, yes; it 's all right, Jewel, only it just came over me that in a week, or perhaps sooner, you 'll be gone."

"It 's real kind of you to be glad to have me stay," said the child. "I try not to think about going away, because it does make me feel sorry every time. You

know the soot blows all around in Chicago and we have n't any yard, and when I think about all the sky and trees here, and the ravine, beside grandpa and you and Zeke and Essex Maid — why I have to just say 'I *won't* be sorry,' and then think about father and mother and Star and all the nice things! I think Star will like the park pretty well." Jewel looked into space thoughtfully, and then shook her head. "I 'm sure the morning we go I shall have to say: 'Green pastures are before me' over and over."

"What do you mean, child?"

"Why, you know the psalm: 'He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters'?"

"Yes."

"Well, in our hymnal there 's the line of a hymn: 'Green pastures are before me,' and mother and I used to say that line every morning when we woke up, to remind us that Love was going to lead us all day."

"I 'd like to see your mother," said Mrs. Forbes after a pause.

"You will, to-night," cried Jewel, suddenly joyous again. "Oh, Mrs. Forbes, do you think I could take Anna Belle to New York?"

"What did Mr. Evringham say?"

"He went away before I had a chance to ask him." Jewel looked wistfully toward the chair where the doll sat by the window, toeing in, her sweet gaze fixed on the wall-paper. "She would enjoy it so!" added the little girl.

"Oh, it 's a tiresome trip for children, such late hours," returned Mrs. Forbes persuasively. "Beside,"

with an inspiration, "you 'd like your hands free to help your mother carry her bags, would n't you?"

"That 's so," responded Jewel. "Anna Belle would always give up anything for her grandma!" and as the housekeeper finished tying the hair bows, the little girl skipped over to the chair and knelt before the doll, explaining the situation to her with a joyous incoherence mingled with hugs and kisses from which the even-tempered Anna Belle emerged apparently dazed but docile.

"Come here and get your shoes on, Jewel."

"My best ones," returned the child.

"Oh, yes, the best of everything," said Mrs. Forbes good-humoredly; and indeed, when Jewel was arrayed, she viewed herself in the mirror with satisfaction.

Zeke presented himself soon, fine in a new summer suit and hat, and Mrs. Forbes watched the pair as they walked down the driveway.

"Now, I can't let the grass grow under my feet," she muttered. "I expected to have till to-morrow night to get all the things done that Mr. Evringham told me to, but I guess I can get through."

Jewel and Zeke had ample time for the train. Indeed, the little girl's patience was somewhat tried before the big headlight came in view. She could not do such injustice to her silk dress and daisy-wreathed leghorn hat as to hop and skip, so she stood demurely with Zeke on the station platform, and as they waited he regarded her happy expectant face.

"Remember the day you got here, kid?" he asked.

"Yes. Is n't it a long time since you came and met me with Dick, and he just whirled us home!"

"Sure it is. And now you 're glad to be leaving us"

"I am not, Zeke!"

"Well, you look in the glass and see for yourself."

Just then the train came along and Zeke swung the child up to the high step. The fact that she found a seat by the window added a ray to her shining eyes. Her companion took the place beside her.

"Yes," he went on, as the train started, "it 's kind of hard on the rest of us to have you so tickled over the prospect."

"I 'm only happy over father and mother," returned Jewel.

"Pretty nice folks, are they?"

Jewel shook her head significantly. "You just wait and see," she replied with zest.

"Which one do you look like?"

"Like father. Mother 's much prettier than father."

"A beauty, is she?"

"N—o, I don't believe so. She is n't so pretty as cousin Eloise, but then she 's pretty."

"That 's probably the reason your grandfather likes to see you around — because you look like his side of the house."

"Well," Jewel sighed, "I hope grandpa likes my nose. I don't."

Zeke laughed. "He seems able to put up with it. I expect there 's going to be ructions around here the next week."

"What 's ructions?"

"Well, some folks might call it error. I don't know. Mr. Evringham 's going to be pretty busy with his own nose. It 's going to be put out of joint to-night. The green-eyed monster 's going to get on the rampage, or I miss my guess."

Jewel looked up doubtfully. Zeke was a joker, of course, being a man, but what was he driving at now?

"What green-eyed monster?" she asked.

"Oh, the one that lives in folks' hearts and lays low part of the time," replied Zeke.

"Do you mean jealousy, envy, hatred, or malice!" asked Jewel so glibly that her companion stared.

"Great Scott! What do you know about that outfit?" he asked.

The child nodded wisely. "I know people believe in them sometimes; but you need n't think grandpa does, because he does n't."

"Mr. Evringham 's all right," agreed Zeke, "but he is n't going to be the only pebble any longer. Your father and mother will be the whole thing now."

The child was thoughtful a moment, then she began earnestly: "Oh, I 'm sure grandpa knows how it is about loving. The more people you love, the more you can love. I can love father and mother more because I 've learned to love grandpa, and he can love them more too, because he has learned to love me."

"Humph! We 'll see," remarked the other, smiling.

"Is error talking to you, Zeke? Are you laying laws on grandpa?"

"Well, if I am, I 'll stop it mighty quick. You don't catch me taking any such liberties. Whoa!" drawing on imaginary reins as the engine slackened at a station.

Jewel laughed, and from that time until they reached New York they chatted about her pony Star, and other less important horses, and of the child's anticipation of showing her mother the joys of Bel-Air Park.

CHAPTER II

THE BROKER'S OFFICE

It was the first time Jewel had visited her grandfather's office and she was impressed anew with his importance as she entered the stone building and ascended in the elevator to mysterious heights.

Arrived in an electric-lighted anteroom, Zeke's request to see Mr. Evringham was met by a sharp-eyed young man who denied it with a cold, inquiring stare. Then the glance of this factotum fell to Jewel's uplifted, rose-tinted face and her trustful gaze fixed on his own.

Zeke twirled his hat slowly between his hands.

"You just step into Mr. Evringham's office," he said quietly, "and tell him the young lady he invited has arrived."

Jewel wondered how this person, who had the privilege of being near her grandfather all day, could look so forbidding; but in her happy excitement she could not refrain from smiling at him under the nodding hat brim.

"I 'm going to dinner with him," she said softly, "and I *think* we 're going to have Nesselrode pudding."

The young man's eyes stared and then began to twinkle. "Oh," he returned, "in that case" — then he turned and left the visitors.

When he entered the sanctum of his employer he was smiling. Mr. Evringham did not look up at once. When he did, it was with a brief, "Well?"

"A young lady insists upon seeing you, sir."

"Kindly stop grinning, Masterson, and tell her she must state her business."

"She has done so, sir," but Masterson did not stop grinning. "She looks like a summer girl, and I guess she is one."

Mr. Evringham frowned at this unprecedented levity. "What is her business, briefly?" he asked curtly.

"To eat Nesselrode pudding, sir."

The broker started. "Ah!" he exclaimed, and though he still frowned, he reflected his junior's smile. "Is there some one with her?"

"A young man."

"Send them in, please."

Masterson obeyed and managed to linger until his curiosity was both appeased and heightened by seeing Jewel run across the Turkish rug and completely submerge the stately gray head beneath the brim of her hat.

"Well, I 'll — be — everlastingly" — thought Masterson, as he softly passed out and closed the door behind him. "Even Achilles could get it in the heel, but I 'll swear I did n't believe the old man had a joint in his armor."

Zeke stood twisting his hat, and when his employer was allowed to come to the surface, he spoke respectfully: —

"Mother said I was to bring word if you would like a late supper, sir."

"Tell Mrs. Forbes that it will be only something light, if anything. She need not prepare."

Jewel danced to the door with her escort as he went. "Good-by, Zeke," she said gayly. "Thank you for bringing me."

"Good-by, Jewel," he returned in subdued accents, and stumbling on the threshold, passed out with a furtive wave of his hat.

The child returned and jumped into a chair by the desk, reserved for the selected visitors who succeeded in invading this precinct. "I suppose you are n't quite through," she said, fixing her host with a blissful gaze as he worked among a scattered pile of papers.

"Very nearly," he returned. He saw that she was near to bubbling over with ideas ready to pour out to him. He knew, too, that she would wait his time. It entertained him to watch her furtively as she gave herself to inspecting the furnishings of the room and the pictures on the wall, then looked down at the patent leather tips of her best shoes as they swung to and fro. At last she began to look at him more and more wistfully, and to view the furnishings of the large desk. It had a broad shelf at the top.

Suddenly Jewel caught sight of a picture standing there in a square frame, and an irrepressible "Oh!" escaped from her lips.

She pressed her hands together and Mr. Evringham saw a deeper rose in her cheeks. He followed her eyes, and silently taking the picture from the desk placed it in her lap. She clasped it eagerly. It was a fine photograph of Essex Maid, her grandfather's mare.

In a minute he spoke: —

"Now I think I 'm about through, Jewel," he said, leaning back in his chair.

"Oh, grandpa, do these cost very much?"

"Why? Do you want to have Star sit for his picture?"

"Yes, it *would* be nice to have a picture of Star, would n't it! I never thought of that. I mean to ask mother if I can."

The broker winced.

"What I was thinking of was, could I have a picture of Essex Maid to take with me to Chicago?"

Mr. Evringham nodded. "I will get you one." He kept on nodding slightly, and Jewel noted the expression of his eyes. Her bright look began to cloud as her grandfather continued to gaze at her.

"You 'd like to have a picture of Star to keep, would n't you?" she asked softly, her head falling a little to one side in loving recognition of his sadness.

"Yes," he answered, rather gruffly, "and I 've been thinking for some weeks that there was a picture lacking on my desk here."

"Star's?" asked Jewel.

"No. Yours. Are there any pictures of you?"

"No, only when I was a baby. You ought to see me. I was as *fat!*"

"We 'll have some photographs of you."

"Oh," Jewel spoke wistfully, "I wish I was pretty."

"Then you would n't be an Evringham."

"Why not? You are," returned the child, so spontaneously that slow color mounted to the broker's face, and he smiled.

"I look like my mother's family, they say. At any

rate, — after a pause and scrutiny of her, — "it 's your face, it 's my Jewel's face, that suits me and that I want to keep. If I can find somebody who can do it and not change you into some one else, I am going to have a little picture painted; a miniature, that I can carry in my pocket when Essex Maid and I are left alone."

The brusque pain in his tone filled Jewel's eyes, and her little hands clasped tighter the frame she held in her lap.

"Then you will give me one of you, too, grandpa?"

"Oh, child," he returned, rather hoarsely, "it 's too late to be painting my leather countenance."

"No one could paint it just as I know it," said Jewel softly. "I know all the ways you look, grandpa, — when you 're joking or when you 're sorry, or happy, and they 're all in here," she pressed one hand to her breast in a simple fervor that, with her moist eyes, compelled Mr. Evringham to swallow several times; "but I 'd like one in my hand to show to people when I tell them about you."

The broker looked away and fussed with an envelope.

"Grandpa," continued the child after a pause, "I 've been thinking that there 's one secret we 've got to keep from father and mother."

Mr. Evringham looked back at her. This was the most cheering word he had heard for some time.

"It would n't be loving to let them know how sorry it makes us to say good-by, would it? I get such lumps in my throat when I think about not riding with you or having breakfast together. I do work over it and think how happy it will be to have father and mother again, and how Love gives us everything we

ought to have and everything like that; but I *have* — cried — twice, thinking about it! Even Anna Belle is mortified the way I act. I know you feel sorry, too, and we 've got to demonstrate over it; but it 'll come so soon, and I guess I did n't begin to work in time. Anyway, I was wondering if we could n't just have a secret and manage not to say good-by to each other." The corners of the child's mouth were twitching down now, and she took out a small handkerchief and wiped her eyes.

Mr. Evringham blew his nose violently, and crossing the office turned the key in the door.

"I think that would be an excellent plan, Jewel," he returned, rather thickly, but with an endeavor to speak heartily. "Of course your confounded — I mean to say your — your parents will naturally expect you to follow their plans and" — he paused.

"And it would be so unloving to let them think that I was sorry after they let me have such a beautiful visit, and if we can *just* — manage not to say good-by, everything will be so much easier."

The broker stood looking at her while the plaintive voice made music for him. "I 'm going to try to manage just that thing if it 's in the books," he said, after waiting a little, and Jewel, looking up at him with an April smile, saw that his eyes were wet.

"You 're so good, grandpa," she returned tremulously; "and I won't even kiss Essex Maid's neck — not the last morning."

He sat down with fallen gaze, and Jewel caught her lip with her teeth as she looked at him. Then suddenly the leghorn hat was on the floor, daisy side down, while

she climbed into his lap and her soft cheek buried itself under Mr. Evringham's ear.

"How m-many m-miles off is Chicago?" stammered the child, trying to repress her sobs, all happy considerations suddenly lost in the realization of her grandfather's lonely lot.

"A good many more than it ought to be. Don't cry, Jewel." The broker's heart swelled within him as he pressed her to his breast. Her sorrow filled him with tender elation, and he winked hard.

"There is n't — is n't any sorrow — in mind, grandpa. Should n't you — you think I 'd — remember it? Divine Love always — always takes care — of us — and just because — I don't see how He 's going — going to this time — I 'm crying! Oh, it 's so — so naughty!"

Mr. Evringham swallowed fast. He never had wondered so much as he did this minute just how obstinate or how docile those inconvenient and superfluous individuals — Jewel's parents — would prove.

He cleared his throat. "Come, come," he said, and he kissed the warm pink rose of the child's cheek. "Don't spoil those bright eyes just when you 're going to have your picture taken. We 're going to have the jolliest time you ever heard of!"

Jewel's little handkerchief was wet and Mr. Evringham put his own into her hand and they went into the lavatory where she used the wet corner of a towel while he told her about the photographer who had taken Essex Maid's picture and should take Star's.

Then the cherished leghorn hat was rescued from its ignominy and replaced carefully on its owner's head.

"But I never thought you meant to have my picture

taken this afternoon," said Jewel, her lips still somewhat tremulous.

"I did n't until a minute ago, but I think we can find somebody who won't mind doing it late in the day."

"Yours too, then, grandpa. — Oh, *yes*," and at last a smile beamed like the sun out of an April sky, "right on the same card with me!"

"Oh, no, no, Jewel; no, no!"

"Yes, *please*, grandpa," earnestly, "do let 's have one nice nose in the picture!" She lifted eyes veiled again with a threatening mist. "And you 'll put your arm around me — and then I 'll look at it" — her lip twitched.

"Yes, oh, yes, I — I think so," hastily. "We 'll see, and then, after that — how much Nesselrode pudding do you think you can eat? I tell you, Jewel, we 're going to have the time of our lives!" Mr. Evringham struck his hands together with such lively anticipation that the child's spirits rose.

"Yes," she responded, "and then after dinner, *what?*" She gazed at him.

The broker tapped his forehead as if knocking at the door of memory.

"Father and mother!" she cried out, laughing and beginning to hop discreetly. "You forgot, grandpa, you forgot. Your own little boy coming home and you forgot!"

"Well, that 's a fact, Jewel; that I suppose I had better remember. He is my own boy — and I don't know but I owe him something after all."

CHAPTER III

HOME–COMING

AGAIN Jewel and her grandfather stood on the wharf where the great boats, ploughing their way through the mighty seas, come finally, each into its own place, as meekly as the horse seeks his stable.

The last time they stood here they were strangers watching the departure of those whom now they waited, hand in hand, to greet.

"Jewel, you made me eat too much dinner," remarked Mr. Evringham. "I feel as if my jacket was buttoned, in spite of the long drive we 've taken since. I went to my tailor this morning, and what do you think he told me?"

"What? That you needed some new clothes?"

"Oh, he always tells me that. He told me that I was growing fat! There, young lady, what do you think of that?"

"I think you are, too, grandpa," returned the child, viewing him critically.

"Well, you take it coolly. Supposing I should lose my waist, and all your fault!"

Jewel drew in her chin and smiled at him.

"Supposing I go waddling about! Eh?"

She laughed. "But how would it be my fault?" she asked.

"Did n't you ever hear the saying 'laugh and grow

fat'? How many times have you made me laugh since we left the office?"

Jewel began to tug on his hand as she jumped up and down. "Oh, grandpa, do you think our pictures will be good?"

"I think yours will."

"Not yours?" the hopping ceased.

"Oh, yes, excellent, probably. I have n't had one taken in so many years, how can I tell? but here 's one day that they can't get away from us, Jewel. This eighth of June has been a good day, has n't it — and mind, you 're not to tell about the pictures until we see how they come out."

"Yes, have n't we had *fun?* The be-*eau*tiful hotel, and the drive in the park, and the ride in the boat, and" —

"Speaking of boats, there it is now. They 're coming," remarked Mr. Evringham.

"Who?"

"Mr. and Mrs. Henry Thayer Evringham," returned the broker dryly. "Steady, Jewel, steady now. It will be quite a while before you see them."

The late twilight had faded and the June night begun, the wharf was dimly lighted and there was the usual crowd of customs officers, porters, and men and women waiting to see friends. All moved and changed like figures in a kaleidoscope before Jewel's unwinking gaze; but the long minutes dragged by until at last her father and mother appeared among the passengers who came in procession down the steep incline from the boat.

Mr. Evringham drew back a step as father, mother,

and child clung to each other, kissing and murmuring with soft exclamations. Harry extricated himself first and shook hands with his father.

"Awfully good of you to get us the courtesy of the port," he said heartily.

"Don't mention it," returned the broker, and Julia released Jewel and turned upon Mr. Evringham her grateful face.

"But so many things are good of you," she said feelingly, as she held out her hand. "It will take us a long time to give thanks."

"Not at all, I assure you," responded the broker coldly, but his heart was hot within him. "If they have the presumption to thank me for taking care of Jewel!" he was thinking as he dropped his daughter-in-law's hand.

"What a human iceberg!" she thought. "How has Jewel been able to take it so cheerfully? Ah, the blessed, loving heart of a child!"

Meanwhile Mr. Evringham turned to his son and continued: "The courtesy of the port does shorten things up a bit, and I have a man from the customs waiting."

Harry followed him to see about the luggage, and Mrs. Evringham and Jewel sat down on a pile of boxes to wait. The mother's arm was around the little girl, and Jewel had one of the gloved hands in both her own.

"Oh," she exclaimed, suddenly starting up, "Mrs. Forbes thought I 'd better wear my sailor suit instead of this, and she told me not to sit down on anything dirty." She carefully turned up the skirt of her little

frock and seated herself again on a very brief petticoat.

Mrs. Evringham smiled. "Mrs. Forbes is careful of you, is n't she?" she asked. Her heart was in a tumult of happiness and also of curiosity as to her child's experiences in the last two months. Jewel's letters had conveyed that she was content, and joy in her pony had been freely expressed. The mother's mental picture of the stiff, cold individual to whose doubtful mercies she had confided her child at such short notice had been softened by the references to him in Jewel's letters; and it was with a shock of disappointment that she found herself repulsed now by the same unyielding personality, the same cold-eyed, unsmiling, fastidiously dressed figure, whose image had lingered in her memory. A dozen eager questions rose to her lips, but she repressed them.

"Jewel must have had a glimpse of the real man," she thought. "I must not cloud her perception." It did not occur to her, however, that the child could even now feel less than awe of the stern guardian with whom she had succeeded in living at peace, and who had, from time to time, bestowed upon her gifts. One of these Mrs. Evringham noticed now.

"Oh, that 's your pretty watch!" she said.

"Yes," returned the child, "this is Little Faithful. Is n't he a darling?"

The mother smiled as she lifted the silver cherub. "You 've named him?" she returned. "Why, it is a beauty, Jewel. How kind of your grandfather!"

"Yes, indeed. It was so I would n't stay in the ravine too long."

"How is Anna Belle?"

"Dear Anna Belle!" exclaimed the little girl wistfully. "What a good time she would have had if I could have brought her! But you see I needed both my hands to help carry bags; and she understood about it and sent her love. She 'll be sitting up waiting for you."

Mrs. Evringham cast a look toward Harry and his father. "I 'm not sure" — she began, "I hardly think we shall go to Bel-Air to-night. How would you like to stay in at the hotel with us, and then we could go out to the house to-morrow and pack your trunk?"

Jewel looked very sober at this. "Why, it would be pretty hard to wait, mother," she replied. "Hotels are splendid. Grandpa and I had dinner at one. It 's named the Waldorf and it has woods in it just like outdoors; but I thought you 'd be in a hurry to see Star and the Ravine of Happiness and Zeke."

"Well, we 'll wait," returned Mrs. Evringham vaguely. She was more than doubtful of an invitation to Bel-Air Park even for one night; but Harry must arrange it. "We 'll see what father says," she added. "What a pretty locket, my girlie!" As she spoke she lifted a gold heart that hung on a slender gold chain around Jewel's neck.

"Yes. Cousin Eloise gave me that when she went away. She has had it ever since she was as little as I am, and she said she left her heart with me. I 'm so sorry you won't see cousin Eloise."

"So she and her mother have gone away. Were they sorry to go? Did Mr. Evringham — perhaps — think" — the speaker paused. She remembered Jewel's letter about the situation.

"No, they were n't sorry. They 've gone to the seashore; but cousin Eloise and I love each other very much, and her room is so empty now that I've had to keep remembering that you were coming and everything was happy. I guess cousin Eloise is the prettiest girl in the whole world; and since she stopped being sorry we 've had the most *fun*."

"I wish I could see her!" returned Mrs. Evringham heartily. She longed to thank Eloise for supplying the sunshine of love to her child while the grandfather was providing for her material wants. She looked at Jewel now, a picture of health and contentment, her bits of small finery in watch and locket standing as symbols of the care and affection she had received.

"Divine Love has been so kind to us, dearie," she said softly, as she pressed the child closer to her. "He has brought father and mother back across the ocean and has given you such loving friends while we were gone."

In a future day Mrs. Evringham was to learn something of the inner history of the progress of this little pilgrim during her first days at Bel-Air; but the shadows had so entirely faded from Jewel's consciousness that she could not have told it herself — not even such portions of it as she had once realized.

"Yes, indeed, I love Bel-Air and all the people. Even aunt Madge kissed me when she went away and said 'Good-by, you queer little thing!'"

"What did she mean?" asked Mrs. Evringham.

"I don't know. I did n't tell grandpa, because I thought he might not like people calling me queer; but I asked Zeke."

"He 's Mr. Evringham's coachman, is n't he?"

"Yes, and he 's the nicest man, but he only told me that aunt Madge had wheels. I asked him what kind of wheels, and he said he guessed they were rubber-tired, because she was always rubbering and she made people tired. You know Zeke is such a joker, so I have n't found out yet what aunt Madge meant, and it is n't any matter because" — Jewel reached up and hugged her mother, "you 've come home."

Here the two men approached. "No more time for spooning," said Harry cheerfully. "We 're going now, little girls."

After all, there was nothing for Jewel to carry. Her father and grandfather had the dress-suit case and bags.

Mrs. Evringham looked inquiringly at her husband, but he was gayly talking with Jewel as the four walked out to the street.

Mr. Evringham led the way to a carriage that was standing there. "This is ours," he said, opening the door.

Harry put the bags up beside the driver while his wife entered the vehicle, still in doubt as to their destination. Jewel jumped in beside her.

"You 'd better move over, dear," said her mother quietly. "Let Mr. Evringham ride forward."

She was not surprised that Jewel was ignorant of carriage etiquette. It was seldom that either of them had seen the inside of one.

The broker heard the suggestion. "*Place aux dames*," he said, briefly, and moved the child back with one hand. Then he entered, Harry jumped in beside him, slammed the door, and they rolled away.

"If Anna Belle was here the whole family would be together," said Jewel joyously. "I don't care which one I sit by. I love everybody in this carriage!"

"You do, eh, rascal?" returned her father, putting his hand over in her silken lap and giving her a little shake. "Where is the great and good Anna Belle?"

"Waiting for us. Just think of it, all this time! Grandpa, are we going home with you?"

"What do you mean?" inquired the broker, and the tone of the curt question chilled the spine of his daughter-in-law. "Were you thinking of spending the night in the ferry-house, perhaps?"

"Why, no, only mother said"—

Mrs. Evringham pressed the child's arm. "That was nothing, Jewel; I simply did n't know what the plan was," she put in hastily.

"Oh, of course," went on the little girl. "Mother did n't know aunt Madge and cousin Eloise were gone, and she did n't believe there 'd be room. She does n't know how big the house is, does she, grandpa?" An irresistible yawn seized the child, and in the middle of it her father leaned forward and chucked her under the chin.

Her jaws came together with a snap. "There! you spoiled that nice one!" she exclaimed, jumping up and laughing as she flung herself upon her big playmate, and a small scuffle ensued in which the wide leghorn hat brim sawed against Mr. Evringham's shoulder and neck in a manner that caused Mrs. Evringham's heart to leap toward her throat. How *could* Harry be so thoughtless! A street lamp showed the grim lines of the broker's averted face as he gazed stonily out to the street.

BLUFFS

"Come here, Jewel; sit still," said the mother, striving to pull the little girl back into her seat.

Harry was laughing and holding his agile assailant off as best he might, and at his wife's voice aided her efforts with a gentle push. Jewel sank back on the cushion.

"Oh, what bores he thinks us. I know he does!" reflected Julia, capturing her child in one arm and holding her close. To her surprise and even dismay, Jewel spoke cheerfully after another yawn: —

"Grandpa, how far is it to the ferry? How long, I mean?"

"About fifteen minutes."

"Well, that's a good while. My eyes do feel as if they had sticks in them. Don't you wish we could cross in a swan boat, grandpa?"

"Humph!" he responded. Mrs. Evringham gave the child a little squeeze intended to be repressive. Jewel wriggled around a minute trying to get a comfortable position.

"Tell father and mother about Central Park and the swan boats, grandpa," she continued.

"You tell them to-morrow, when you're not so sleepy," he replied.

Jewel took off her large hat, and nestling her head on her mother's shoulder, put an arm around her. "Mother, mother!" she sighed happily, "are you really home?"

"Really, really," replied Mrs. Evringham, with a responsive squeeze.

Mr. Evringham sat erect in silence, still gazing out the window with a forbidding expression.

There were buttons on her mother's gown that rubbed Jewel's cheek. She tried to avoid them for a minute and then sat up. "Father, will you change places with me?" she asked sleepily. "I want to sit by grandpa."

Mrs. Evringham's eyes widened, and in spite of her earnest "Dearie!" the transfer was made and Jewel crept under Mr. Evringham's arm, which closed naturally around her. She leaned against him and shut her eyes.

"You must n't go to sleep," he said.

"I guess I shall," returned the child softly.

"No, no. You must n't. Think of the lights crossing the ferry. You 'll lose a lot if you 're asleep. They 're fine to see. We can't carry you and the luggage, too. Brace up, now — Come, come! I should n't think you were any older than Anna Belle."

Jewel laughed sleepily, and the broker held her hand in his while he pushed her upright. Mr. and Mrs. Evringham looked on, the latter marveling at the child's nonchalance.

Now, for the first time, the host became talkative.

"How many days have you to give us, Harry?" he asked.

"A couple, perhaps," replied the young man.

"Two days, father!" exclaimed Jewel, in dismay, wide awake in an instant.

"Oh, that 's a stingy visit," remarked Mr. Evringham.

"Not half long enough," added Jewel. "There 's so much for you to see."

"Oh, we can see a lot in two days," returned Harry. "Think of the little girls in Chicago, Jewel. They won't forgive me if I don't bring you home pretty soon." He

leaned forward and took his child's free hand. "How do you suppose father has got along without his little girl all these weeks, eh, baby?"

"It *is* a long time since you went away," she returned, "but I was right in your room every night, and daytimes I played in your ravine. Bel-Air Park is the beautifulest place in the whole world. Two days is n't any time to stay there, father."

"H'm, I 'm glad you 've been so happy." Sincere feeling vibrated in the speaker's voice. "We don't know how to thank your grandpa, do we?"

A street lamp showed Jewel, as she turned and smiled up into the impassive face Mr. Evringham turned upon her.

"You can safely leave that to her," said the broker briefly, but he did not remove his eyes from the upturned ones.

"It is beyond me," thought Mrs. Evringham; "but love is a miracle-worker."

The glowing lights of the ferry passed, Jewel did go to sleep in the train. Her father, unaware that he was trespassing, took her in his arms, and, tired out with all the excitement of the day and the lateness of the hour, the child instantly became unconscious; but by the time they reached home, the bustle of arrival and her interest in showing her parents about, aided her in waking to the situation.

Mrs. Forbes stood ready to welcome the party. Ten years had passed since Harry Evringham had stood in the home of his boyhood, and the housekeeper thought she perceived that he was moved by a contrite memory; but he spoke with bluff heartiness as he shook hands

with her; and Mrs. Forbes looked with eager curiosity into the sweet face of Mrs. Evringham, as the latter greeted her and said something grateful concerning the housekeeper's kindness to Jewel.

"It 's very little you have to thank me for, ma'am," replied Mrs. Forbes, charmed at once by the soft gaze of the dark eyes.

The little cavalcade moved upstairs to the handsome rooms so lately vacated. They were brilliant with light and fragrant with roses.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed Mrs. Evringham, while Jewel hopped up and down, as wide awake as any little girl in town, delighted with the gala appearance of everything.

Mr. Evringham looked critically into the face of his daughter-in-law. Here was the woman to whom he owed Jewel, and all that she was and all that she had taught him. Her face was what he might have expected. It looked very charming now as the pretty eyes met his. She was well-dressed, too, and Mr. Evringham liked that.

"I hope you will be very much at home here, Julia," he said; and though he did not smile, it was certain that, whether from a sense of duty or not, he had taken pains to make their welcome a pleasant one.

Jewel had, evidently, no slightest fear of his cold reserve. With the child's hand in hers, Julia took courage to reply warmly: "Thank you, father, it is a joy to be here."

She had called him "father," this elegant stranger, and her heart beat a little faster, but her husband's arm went around her.

"America 's all right, eh, Julia? "

"Come in cousin Eloise's room," cried Jewel. "That 's all lighted, too. Are they going to have them both, grandpa? "

She danced ahead, through a spacious white-tiled bathroom and into the adjoining apartment. There an unexpected sight met the child's eyes. In the rosy depths of a large chintz chair sat Anna Belle, loyally keeping her eyes open in spite of the hour.

Jewel rushed toward her. There were plenty of flowers scattered about in this room, also, and the child suddenly caught sight of her own toilet articles on the dresser.

"My things are down here in cousin Eloise's room, grandpa! " she cried, so surprised that she delayed picking up her doll.

"Why, why! " said Mr. Evringham, throwing open the door of the large closet and then opening a bureau drawer. Within both receptacles were Jewel's belongings, neatly arranged. "This is odd! " he added.

"Grandpa, grandpa! " cried the child, rushing at him and clasping her arms around his waist. "You 're going to let me sleep down here by father and mother! "

Mr. Evringham regarded her unsmilingly. Jewel's parents both looked on, more than half expecting a snub to meet the energetic onslaught. "You won't object, will you? " he asked.

Jewel pulled him down and whispered something in his ear. The curious on-lookers saw the sweeping mustache curve in a smile as he straightened up again. As a matter of fact they were both curious to know what she had said to him.

"You're whispering in company, Jewel," remarked her father.

"Oh, please excuse me!" said the child. "I forgot to remember. Here 's Anna Belle, father."

"My, my, my!" ejaculated Harry Evringham, coming forward. "How that child has grown!"

CHAPTER IV

ON THE VERANDA

WHAT a luxurious, happy, sleepy time Jewel had that night in the pretty rose-bower where her mother undressed her while her father and grandfather went back downstairs.

It was very sweet to be helped and cuddled as if she were again a baby, and as she lay in bed and watched her mother setting the flowers in the bathroom and arranging everything, she tried to talk to her on some of the subjects that were uppermost in her mind. Mrs. Evringham came at last and lay down beside her. Jewel nestled into the loving arms and kissed her cheek.

"I 'm too happy to go to sleep," she declared, then sighed, and instantly pretty room and pretty mother had disappeared.

Mrs. Evringham lay there on the luxurious bed, the sleeping child in her arms, and her thoughts were rich with gratitude. Her life had never been free from care: first as a young girl in her widowed mother's home, then as wife of the easy-going and unprincipled youth, whose desertion of her and her baby had filled her cup of bitterness, though she bravely struggled on. Her mother had died; and soon afterward the light of Christian Science had dawned upon her path. Strengthened by its support, she had grown into new health and courage,

and life was beginning to blossom for her when her repentant husband returned.

For a time his wayward habits were a care to her; but he was sincerely ashamed of himself, and the discovery of the development of character in the pretty girl whom he had left six years before roused his manhood. To her joy he began to take an interest in the faith which had wrought such changes in her, and after that she had no doubts of the outcome. From the moment when she obtained for him a business position, it became his ambition to take his rightful place in the world and to guard her from rough contact, and though as yet he still leaned upon her judgment, and she knew herself to be the earthly mainspring of all their business affairs, she knew, also, that his desire was right, and the knowledge sweetened her days.

Here in this home which was, to her unaccustomed eyes, palatial in its appointments, with her child again in her arms, she gave thanks for the joy of the present hour. A day or two of pleasure in these surroundings, and then she and Harry would relieve Mr. Evringham of the care they had imposed upon him.

He had borne it nobly, there was no doubt about that. He had even complicated existence by giving Jewel a pony. How a pony would fit into the frugal, busy life of the Chicago apartment, Julia did not know; but her child's dearest wish had been gratified, and there was nothing to do but appreciate and enjoy the fact. After all, Harry's father must have more paternal affection than her husband had ever given him credit for; for even on the most superficial acquaintance one could see that any adaptation of his life and tastes to those of a

child would have to come with creaking difficulty to the stock broker, and the fact of Jewel's ease with him told an eloquent story of how far Mr. Evringham must have constrained himself for Harry's sake.

Her thoughts flowed on and had passed to business and all that awaited them in Chicago, when her husband rejoined her. She rose from the bed as he came in, and hand in hand they stood and looked down at Jewel, asleep.

Harry stooped and kissed the flushed cheek.

"Don't wake her, dear," said Julia, smiling at the energy of the caress.

"Wake her? I don't believe a clap of thunder would have that effect. Why, she and father have been painting the town; dining at the Waldorf, driving in the park, riding in the swan boats, and then hanging around that dock. Bless her little heart, I should think she 'd sleep for twenty-four hours."

"How wonderfully kind of him!" returned Julia. "You need never tell me again, Harry, that your father does n't love you."

"Oh, loving has n't been much in father's line, but we hope it will be," returned the young man as he slipped an arm around his wife. "Do you remember the last time we stood watching Jewel asleep? I do. It was in that beastly hotel the night before we sailed."

"Oh, Harry!" Julia buried her face a moment on his shoulder. "Shall you ever forget our relief when her first letter came, showing that she was happy? Do you remember the hornpipe you danced in our lodgings and how you shocked the landlady? Your father may not *call* it loving, but his care and thoughtfulness have

expressed that and he can't help my loving *him* forever and forever for being kind to Jewel."

Harry gave his head a quick shake. "I 'll be hanged if I can see how anybody could be unkind to her," he remarked.

"Oh, well, you 've never been an elderly man, set in your ways and used to living alone. I 'm sure it meant a great deal to him. Think of his doing all that for her this afternoon."

"Oh, he had to pass the time somehow, and he could n't very well refuse to let her come in to meet us. Besides, she 's on the eve of going away, and father likes to do the handsome thing. He was doing it for other people, though, when Lawrence and I were kids. He never took us in any swan boats."

"Poor little boys!" murmured Julia.

"Oh, not at all," returned Harry, laughing rather sardonically. "We took ourselves in the swan boats and in a variety of other places not so picturesque. Father's purse strings were always loose, and so long as we kept out of his way he did n't care what we did. Nice old place, this, Julia?"

"Oh, it 's very fine. I had no idea how fine." Her tone was somewhat awestruck.

"I used to know, absolutely, that father was through with me, and that therefore I was through with Bel-Air; but I 'm a new man," the speaker smiled down at his wife and pressed her closer to him, "and I 've been telling father why, and how."

"Is that what you 've been talking about?"

"Yes. He seemed interested to hear of my business and prospects and asked me a lot of questions; so, as I

only began to live less than a year ago, I could n't answer them without telling him who and what had set me on my feet."

"Oh, Harry! You've really been talking about Science?"

"Yes, my dear, and about you; and I tell you, he was n't bored. When I 'd let up a little he 'd ask me another question; and at last he said, father did, 'Well, I believe she 'll make a man of you yet, Harry!' Not too complimentary, I admit, but I swallowed it and never flinched. I knew he was n't going to see enough of you in two days to half know you, so I just thought I 'd give him a few statistics, and they made an impression, I assure you. After that if he wanted to set me down a little it was no more than I deserved, and he was welcome."

For a long moment the two looked into one another's eyes, then Harry spoke in a subdued tone: —

"You 've done a lot for me, Julia; but the biggest thing of all, the thing that is most wonderful and that means the most to me, and for which I 'd worship you through eternity if it was *all* you 'd done, is that you have taught me of Christian Science and shown me how it has guarded that child's love and respect for me, when I was forfeiting both every hour. I 'll work to my last day, my girl, to show you my gratitude for that."

"Darling boy!" she murmured.

Next morning at rising time Jewel was still wrapped in slumber. Her parents looked at her before going downstairs.

"Do you know, I can't help feeling a bit relieved,"

laughed Julia softly, "that she won't go down with us. The little thing is rather thoughtless with her grandfather, and though he has evidently schooled himself to endure her energetic ways, I can't help feeling a bit anxious all the time. He has borne it so well this long that I want to get her away before she breaks the camel's back. When do you think we can go, Harry?"

"To-morrow or next day. You might get things packed to-day. I really ought to go, but I don't want to seem in a hurry."

"Oh, yes, do let us go to-morrow," returned Julia eagerly.

The Westminster clock on the stairs chimed as they passed down, and Mr. Evringham was waiting for them in the dining-room. As he said good-morning he looked beyond them, expectantly.

Mrs. Forbes greeted them respectfully and indicated their seats.

"Where is Jewel?" asked the host.

"In dreamland. You could n't waken her with a volley of artillery," returned Harry cheerfully.

"H'm," returned his father.

They all took their places at the table and Julia remarked on the charming outlook from the windows.

"Yes," returned the host. "I 'm sorry I can't stay at home this morning and do the honors of the park. I shall leave that to Harry and Jewel. As we were rather late last night I did n't take my canter this morning. If you wish to have a turn on the mare, Harry, Zeke knows that the stables are in your hands. No one but myself rides Essex Maid, but I 'll make a shining exception of you."

"I appreciate the honor," returned Harry lightly, but as a matter of fact he did not at all grasp its extent.

"If you 'd like to take your wife for a drive there 's the Spider. The child will want to show you her pony and will probably get you off on some excursion. Tell her there is time enough and not to make you do two days' work in one."

After breakfast the trio adjourned to the piazza and Julia looked out on the thick, dewy grass and spreading trees.

"I believe the park improves, father," said Harry, smiling as he noted his wife's delight in the charming landscape.

Deep armchairs and tables, rugs and a wicker divan furnished a portion of the piazza. "How will little Jewel like the apartment after this?" Julia could not help asking herself the question mentally. She no longer wondered at the child's content here, even without the companionship of other children. It must be an unimaginative little maid who, supported by Anna Belle, could not weave a fairy-land in this fresh paradise.

"Won't you be seated?" said the broker, waving his hand toward the chairs. The others obeyed as he took his place. "Let us know a little, now, what we are doing. What did I understand you to say, Harry, is your limit for time?"

"Well, I ought, really, to go west to-morrow, father."

Mr. Evringham nodded and turned his incisive glance upon his daughter-in-law. "And you, Julia?"

She smiled brightly at him. He observed that her

complexion bore the sunlight well. "Oh, Jewel and I go with him, of course," she responded, confident that her reply would convey satisfaction.

"H'm. Indeed! Now it seems to me that you would be the better for a vacation."

"Why! Have n't I just had a trip to Europe?"

"Yes, I should think you had. From all that Harry tells me, I judge what with hunting up fashions and fabrics and corset-makers and all the rest of it, you have done the work, daily, of about two able-bodied men."

"That 's right," averred Harry. "I was too much of a greenhorn to give her much assistance."

"Still, you understand your own end of the business, I take it," said his father, turning suddenly upon him.

"Yes, I do. I believe the firm will say I 'm the square peg in the square hole."

"Then why not take a vacation, Julia?" asked the broker again.

"Harry is doing splendidly," she returned gently, "but we can't live on the salary he gets now. He needs my help for a while, yet. I 'm going to be a lady of leisure some day." The broker caught the glance of confidence she sent his boy.

"I 'm screwing up my courage now to strike them for more," said Harry. "It frets me worse every day to see that girl delving away, and a great strapping, hulking chap like me not able to prevent it."

His father looked gravely at the young wife. "Let him begin now," he said. "He does n't need your apron string any longer."

"What do you mean?" asked Julia, half timidly.

"Stay here with me a while and let Harry go west. I will take you and Jewel to the seashore."

"Hurray!" cried Harry, his face radiant. "Julia, why, you won't know yourself strolling on the sands with a parasol while your poor delicate husband is toiling and moiling away in the dingy city. Good for you, father! You lift that pretty nose of hers up from the grindstone where she 's held it so many years that she does n't know anything different. Hurray, Julia!" In his enthusiasm the speaker rose and leaned over the chair of his astonished wife. "You wake up in the morning and read a novel instead of your appointment book for a while," he went on. "The Chicago women's summer clothes are all made by this time, anyway. Play lady for once and come back to me the color of mahogany. Go ahead!"

"Why, Harry, how can I? What would you do?"

"I 'm hanged if I don't show you what I 'd do, and do it well, too," he returned.

"But I ought to go home first," faltered the bewildered woman.

"Not a bit of it. I 'll tackle the firm and the apartment, all right: and to be plain, we can't afford the needless car fare."

"But, father," Julia appealed to him, "is it right to make Harry get on still longer without Jewel?"

"Perfectly right. Entirely so," rejoined the broker decidedly.

"Of course he does n't realize how we feel about Jewel," thought Julia.

Here a large brown horse and brougham came around

the driveway into sight. Zeke's eyes turned curiously toward the guests, but he sat stiffly immovable.

The broker rose. "I must go now or I shall miss my train. Think it over. There 's only one way to think about it. It is quite evidently the thing to do. The break has been made, and now is the time for Julia to take her vacation before going into harness again. Moreover, perhaps Harry will get his raise and she won't have to go into harness. Good-morning. I shall try to come out early. I hope you will make yourselves comfortable."

Mrs. Evringham looked at Zeke. He was the glass of fashion and the mould of form, but there was no indication in his smooth-shaven, wooden countenance of the comrade to whom Jewel had referred in her fragmentary letters.

"Well, Harry!" she exclaimed breathlessly, as the carriage rolled away. Her expression elicited a hearty laugh from her husband. "I *never* was so surprised. How unselfish he is! Harry, is it possible that we don't know your father at *all?* Think of his proposing to keep, still longer, a disturbing element like our lively little girl!"

"Oh, I 've never believed he bothered himself very much about Jewel," returned Harry lightly. "You make a mountain out of that. All a child needs is a ten acre lot to let off steam in, and she 's had it here. He knows you 'll keep her out from under foot. Let 's accept this pleasure. He probably takes a lot of stock in you after all I told him last night. It 's a relief to his pride and everything else that I 'm not going to disgrace the name. He wants to do something for you.

That 's the whole thing in a nutshell ; and you let him do it, Julia." In an exuberance of spirits, aided by the fresh, inspiring morning, the speaker took his wife in his arms, as they stood there on the wide veranda, and hugged her heartily.

"Do you think I shall get over my awe of him?" She half laughed, but her tone was sincere. "I 'm so unused to people who never smile and seem to be enduring me. Oh, if you were only going to stay, too, Harry, then it would be a vacation indeed!"

"Here, here! Where are your principles? Who 's afraid now?"

"But he 's so stately and forbidding, and I shall feel such a responsibility of keeping Jewel from troubling him."

Harry laughed again. "She seems entirely capable of paddling her own canoe. She did n't seem troubled by doubts or compunctions in the carriage last night ; and up there in the bedroom when she flew at him! How was that for a case of *lèse majesté?* Gad, at her age I 'd sooner have tackled a lighted fuse! What do you suppose it was she whispered to him?"

"I 've no idea, and I must say I was curious enough to ask her while I was putting her to bed ; but do you know, she would n't say!" The mother laughed. "She sidled about, — you know how she does when she is reluctant to speak, and seemed so embarrassed that I have to laugh when I think of it."

"Perhaps it concerned some surprise she has persuaded father to give us."

"No, it could n't be that, because she answered at last that she 'd tell me when she was a young lady."

They both laughed. "Well," said Harry, "she is n't afraid of him so you 'd notice it; and you can give her a few pointers so she need n't get in father's way now that she has you again. He has evidently been mighty considerate of the little orphan."

"How good he has been!" returned Julia fervently. "If we could only go home with you, Harry," she added wistfully, "while there 's so much good feeling, and before anything happens to alter it!"

"Where are your principles?" asked Harry again. "You know better than to think anything will happen to alter it."

"Yes, I do, I do; but I always have to meet my shyness of strangers, and it makes my heart beat to think of your going off and leaving me here. Being tête-à-tête with your father is appalling, I must confess."

"Oh, well, it would n't do to slight his offer, and it will do you a world of good."

"You 'll have to send me my summer gowns."

"I will."

"Dear me, am I really going to *do* it?" asked Julia incredulously.

"Certainly you are. We 'd be imbecile not to accept such an opportunity."

"Then," she answered resignedly, "if it is fact and not a wild fancy, we have a lot of business to talk over, Harry. Let us make the most of our time while Jewel is asleep."

She led the way back to the chairs, and they were soon immersed in memoranda and discussion.

CHAPTER V

THE LIFTED VEIL

At last their plans were reduced to order and Harry placed the papers carefully in his pocket.

"Come in and let 's have a look at the house, Julia," he suggested. "It won't do to go to the stables without Jewel."

They entered the drawing-room and Julia moved about admiring the pictures and carvings, and paused long before the oil portrait of a beautiful woman, conspicuously placed.

"That 's my grandmother," remarked Harry. "Is n't she stunning? That 's the side of the family I did n't take after."

While they still examined the portrait and the exquisite painting of its laces, Jewel ran into the room and seized them from behind.

"Well, well, all dressed!" exclaimed her father as the two stooped to kiss her.

"Yes, but my hair is n't very nice," said the child, putting up her hand to her braids, "because I did n't want to be late to breakfast."

Her father's hearty laugh rang out. "Lunch, do you mean?"

"We 're through breakfast long ago, dearie," said her mother. "No wonder you slept late. We wanted you to."

"Breakfast 's all through!" exclaimed the child, and they were surprised at her dismay.

"Yes, but Mrs. Forbes will get you something," said her father.

"But has grandpa gone?" asked the child. Before they could reply the housekeeper passed the door and Jewel ran to her. "Has grandpa gone, Mrs. Forbes?" she repeated anxiously.

"Yes, indeed, it 's after ten. Come into the dining-room, Jewel; Sarah will give you your breakfast."

"I 'm not a bit hungry — yes, I am, a little — but what is grandpa's telephone number, Mrs. Forbes."

"Oh, now, you won't call him up, dear," said the housekeeper coaxingly. "Come and eat your breakfast like a good girl."

"Yes, in just one minute I will. What is the number, please, Mrs. Forbes?"

The housekeeper gave the number, and Harry and Julia drew nearer.

"Your grandpa is coming out early, Jewel," said her father. "You 'll see him in a few hours, and you can ask him whatever you wish to then."

"She never has called Mr. Evringham up, sir," said the housekeeper. "He speaks to *her* sometimes. You know, Jewel, your grandfather does n't like to be disturbed in his business and called to the 'phone unless it is something very important."

"It is," returned the child, and she ran to the part of the hall where the instrument was situated. Her mother and father followed, the former feeling that she ought to interfere, but the latter amused and curious.

"My little girl," began Julia, in protest, but Harry

put his hand on her arm and detained her. Jewel was evidently filled with one idea and deaf to all else. With her usual energy she took down the receiver and made her request to the central office. Harry drew his wife to where they could watch her absorbed, rosy face. Her listening expression was anxiously intent. Mrs. Forbes also lingered at a little distance, enjoying the parents' interest and sharing it.

"Is that you, grandpa?" asked the sweet voice.

"Oh, well, I want to see Mr. Evringham."

"What? No. I'm sorry, but nobody will do but grandpa. You tell him it 's Jewel, please."

"What? I thought I *did* speak plain. It 's *Jewel;* his little grandchild."

The little girl smiled at the next response. "Yes, I 'm the very one that ate the Nesselrode pudding," she said, and chuckled into the 'phone.

By this time even Julia had given up all thought of interfering, and was watching, curiously, the round head with its untidy blond hair.

Jewel spoke again. "I 'm sorry I can't tell you the business, but it 's *very* important."

Evidently the earnestness of this declaration had an effect. After a minute more of waiting, the child's face lighted.

"Oh, grandpa, is that you?"

"Yes, I am. I 'm *so* sorry I slept too long!"

"Yes, I know you missed me, and now I have to eat my breakfast without you. Why did n't you come and bring me downstairs?"

"Oh, but I *would* have. Did you feel very sorry when you got in the brougham, grandpa?"

"I know it. Did the ride seem *very* long, all alone?"

"Yes, indeed. I felt so sorry inside when I found you 'd gone, I had to hear you speak so as to get better so I could visit with mother and father."

"Yes, it *is* a comfort. Are you *sure* you don't feel sorry now?"

"Well, but are you smiling, grandpa?"

Whatever the answer was to this, it made Jewel's anxious brows relax and she laughed into the 'phone.

"Grandpa, you 're such a joker! One smile won't make you any fatter," she protested.

Another listening silence, then: —

"You know the reason I feel the worst, don't you?"

"Why yes, you do. What we were talking about yesterday." The child sighed. "Well, is n't it a comfort about eternity?"

"Yes, indeed, and I guess I 'll kiss the 'phone now, grandpa. Can you hear me?"

"Well, you do it, too, then. Yes — yes — I hear it; and you 'll come home early because you know — our secret?"

"What? A lot of men waiting for you? All right. You know I love you just the same, even if I *did* sleep, don't you?"

"Good-by, then, good-by."

She hung up the receiver and turned a beaming face upon her dumbfounded parents.

"Now I 'll have breakfast," she said cheerfully. "I 'll only eat a little because we must go out and see Star. You waited for me, did n't you?" pausing in sudden apprehension.

"Yes, indeed," replied Harry, collecting himself. "We have n't been off the piazza."

"Goody. I 'm so glad. I 'll hurry."

Mrs. Forbes followed the child as she bounded away, and the father and mother sank upon an old settle of Flemish oak, gazing at one another. The veil having been completely lifted from their eyes, each was viewing recent circumstances in a new light.

At last Harry began to laugh in repressed fashion. "Sold, and the money taken!" he ejaculated, softly smiting his knee.

His wife smiled, too, but there was a mist in her eyes.

"I smell a large mouse, Julia. How is it with you?"

"You mean my invitation?"

"I mean that we come under the head of those things that can't be cured and must be endured."

She nodded. "And that 's why he wants to take me to the seashore."

"Yes, but all the same he 's got to do it to carry his point. You get the fun just the same." The moisture that rose to Harry's eyes was forced there by the effort to repress his mirth. "By jinks, the governor kissing the 'phone! I 'll never get over that, never," and he exploded again.

His wife laid her hand on his arm. "Oh, Harry, can't you see how touching it is?"

"I 'll sue him for alienating my daughter's affections. See if I don't. Why, we 're not in it at all. Did you feel our insignificance when she found he 'd gone? We 've been blockheads, Julia, blockheads."

"We 're certainly figureheads," she returned, rather ruefully. "I don't like to feel that your father has to pay such a price for the sake of keeping Jewel a little longer."

"'T won't hurt him a bit. It 's a good joke on him. If he does n't go ahead and take you now, I 'll bring another suit against him for breach of promise."

Julia was looking thoughtfully into space. "I believe," she said, at last, "that we may find out that Jewel has been a missionary here."

"She 's given father a brand new heart," returned Harry promptly. "That 's plain."

"Let us not say a word to the child about the plan for her and me to stay," said Julia. "Let us leave it all for Mr. Evringham."

"All right; only he won't think you 're much pleased with the idea."

"I 'm not," returned the other, smiling. "I 'm a little dazed; but if he was the man he appeared to be the day we left Jewel with him, and she has loved him into being a happier and better man, it may be a matter of duty for us not to deprive him of her at once. I 'll try to resign myself to the rôle of necessary baggage, and even try to conceal from him the fact that I know my place."

"Oh, my girl, you 'll have him captured in a week, and Jewel will have a rival. You have the same knack she has for making the indifferent different."

At this juncture the housekeeper came back into the hall.

"Well, Mrs. Forbes," said Harry, rising, "that was rather amusing important business Jewel had with my father."

The housekeeper held up her hands and shook her head. "Such lovers, sir," she responded. "Such lovers! Whatever he 's going to do without her is more than I know."

"Why, it 's a big change come over father, to be fond of children," returned the young man, openly perplexed.

"*Children!*" repeated the housekeeper. "If you suppose, Mr. Harry, that Jewel is any common child, you must have had a wonderful experience."

Her impressive, almost solemn manner, sobered the father's mood. "What she is, is the result of what her mother has taught her," he returned.

"Not one of us wanted her when she came," said the housekeeper, looking from one to the other of the young couple standing before her. "Not one person in the house was half civil to her." Julia's hand tightened on her husband's arm. "I did n't want anybody troubling Mr. Evringham. People called him a hard, cold, selfish man; but I knew his trials, yes, Mr. Harry, you know I knew them. He was my employer and it was my business to make him comfortable, and I hated that dear little girl because I 'd made up my mind that she 'd upset him. Well, Jewel did n't know anything about hate, not enough to know it when she saw it. She just loved us all, through thick and thin, and you 'll have to wait till you can read what the recording angel 's set down, before you can have any full idea of what she 's done for us. She 's made a humble woman out of me, and I was the stiff-neckedest member of the congregation. There 's my only child, Zeke; she 's persuaded him out of habits that were

breaking up our lives. There was Eloise Evringham, without hope or God in the world. She gave her both, that little Jewel did. Then, most of all, she crept into Mr. Evringham's empty heart and filled it full, and made his whole life, as you might say, blossom again. That 's what she 's done, single handed, in two months, and she has no more conceit of her work than a ray of God's sunshine has when it 's opening a flower bud."

Julia Evringham's gaze was fixed intently upon the speaker, and she was unconscious that two tears rolled down her cheeks.

"You 've made us very happy, telling us this," she said, rather breathlessly, as the housekeeper paused.

"And I should like to add, Mrs. Evringham," said Mrs. Forbes impressively, "that you 'd better turn your attention to an orphan asylum and catch them as young as you can and train them up. What this old world wants is a whole crop of Jewels."

Julia's smile was very sweet. "We may all have the pure child thought," she returned.

Mrs. Forbes passed on upstairs. Harry looked at his wife. He was winking fast. "Well, this is n't any laughing matter, after all, Julia."

"No, it 's a matter to make us very humble with joy and gratitude."

As she spoke Jewel bounded back into the hall and ran into her father's open arms.

"A good breakfast, eh?" he asked tenderly.

"Yes, I did n't mean to be so long, but Sarah said grandpa wanted me to eat a chop. Now, *now*, we 're going to see Star!"

"I 'd better fix your hair first," remarked her mother.

"Oh, let her hair go till lunch time," said Harry. "The horses won't care, will they, Jewel?" He picked her up and set her on his shoulder and out they went to the clean, spacious stables.

Zeke pulled down his shirt-sleeves as he saw them coming. "This is my father and mother, Zeke," cried the child, happily, and the coachman ducked his head with his most unprofessional grin.

"Jewel 's got a great pony here," he said.

"Well, I should think so!" remarked Harry, as he and his wife followed where the child led, to a box stall.

"Why, Jewel, he 's right out of a story!" said her mother, viewing the wavy locks and sweeping tail, as the pony turned eagerly to meet his mistress.

Jewel put her arms around his neck and buried her face for an instant in his mane. "I have n't anything for you, Star, this time," she said, as the pretty creature nosed about her. "Mother, do you see his star?"

"Indeed I do," replied Mrs. Evringham, examining the snowflake between the full, bright eyes. "He 's the prettiest pony I ever saw, Jewel. Did your grandpa have him made to order?"

Zeke shrugged his gingham clad shoulders. "He would have, if he could, ma'am," he put in.

Mrs. Evringham laughed. "Well, he certainly did n't need to. Oh, see that beautiful head!" for Essex Maid looked out to discover what all the disturbance was about.

Harry paused in his examination of the pony, to go over to the mare's stall.

"Whew, what a stunner!" he remarked.

"Mr. Evringham said you were to ride her this morning, sir, if you liked. You 'll be the first, beside him." Zeke paused and with a comical gesture of his head indicated the child and then the mare. "It 's been nip and tuck between them, sir; but I guess Jewel 's got the Maid beat by now."

Harry laughed.

"Two blue ribbons, she 's won, sir. She 'll get another this autumn if he shows her."

"I should think so. She 's a raving beauty." As he spoke, Harry smoothed the bright coat. "When are we going out, Jewel?"

"But we could n't leave mother," returned the child, from her slippery perch on the pony's back. She had been thinking about it. "Are you sure, Zeke, that grandpa said father might ride Essex Maid?"

"He told me so, himself," said Harry, amused.

Jewel shook her head, much impressed. "Then he loves you about the most of anybody," she remarked, with conviction.

"Don't think of me," said her mother. "You and father do just what you like. I can be happy just looking about this beautiful place."

"Oh, I know what," exclaimed Jewel, with sudden brightness. "Let 's all go to the Ravine of Happiness before lunch time, and then wait for grandpa, and he can take mother in the phaeton, and father and I can ride horseback."

"Oh, I 'm afraid your grandpa would n't like that," returned Mrs. Evringham quickly.

Zeke was standing near her. "He would if she said so, ma'am," he put in, in a low tone.

Julia smiled kindly upon him.

Harry tossed his head, amused. "It 's a case, is n't it, Zeke?" he remarked.

"Yes, sir," returned the coachman. "He comes when he 's called, and will eat out of her hand, sir."

Harry laughed and went back to the pony's stall. "Come on, then, Jewel, come to my old stamping ground, the ravine."

"And if her hair frightens the birds it 's your fault," smiled Julia, smoothing with both hands the little flaxen head.

"The birds have seen me look a great deal worse than this, a great *deal* worse," said Jewel cheerfully.

"Perhaps they 'll think her hair is a nest and sit down in it," suggested her father, as they moved away, the happy child between them, holding a hand of each.

The little girl drew in her chin as she looked up at him.

"Oh, father, you 're such a joker!"

CHAPTER VI

THE DIE IS CAST

"Oh, grandpa, we 've had the most *fun!*" cried Jewel that afternoon as she ran down the veranda steps to meet the broker, getting out of the brougham.

Harry and Julia were standing near the wicker chairs watching the welcome. They saw Mr. Evringham stoop to receive the child's embrace, and noted the attention he paid to her chatter as, after lifting his hat to them, he slowly advanced.

"Father and I played in the ravine the longest while. Was n't it a nice time, father?"

"It certainly was a nice, wet time. I am one pair of shoes short, and shall have to travel to Chicago in patent leathers."

As Julia rose she regarded her father-in-law with new eyes. All sense of responsibility had vanished, and her present passive rôle seemed delightful.

"I know more about this beautiful place than when you went away," she said. "I feel as if I were at some picturesque resort. It does n't seem at all as if work-a-day people might live here all the time."

"I 'm glad you like it," returned the broker, and his quick, curt manner of speech no longer startled her. "Have you been driving?"

"No, we preferred to have Jewel plan our campaign, and she seemed to think that the driving part had better wait for you."

The broker turned and looked down at the smooth head with billowy ribbon bows behind the ears. Noting his expression, or lack of it, Julia wondered, momentarily, if she might have dreamed the episode of kissing into the telephone.

"What is your plan, Jewel?" he asked.

She balanced herself springily on her toes. "I thought two of us in the phaeton and two on horseback," she replied, with relish.

"H'm. You in the phaeton and I on Star, perhaps."

"Oh, grandpa, and your feet dragging in the road!" The child's laugh was a gush of merriment.

The broker looked back at his daughter-in-law and handed her the large white package he was carrying. "With my compliments, madam."

Julia flushed prettily as she unwrapped the box. "Oh, Huyler's!" she exclaimed. "How delicious. Thank you so much, father."

Jewel's eyes were big with admiration. "That 's just the kind Dr. Ballard used to give cousin Eloise," she said, sighing. "Sometime I 'll be grown up!"

Mr. Evringham lifted her into his arms with a quick movement. "That 's a far day, thank God," he murmured, his mustache against her hair; then lowering her until he could look into her face: "How have you arranged us, Jewel? Who drives and who rides?"

"Perhaps father would like to drive mother in the phaeton," said the child, again on her feet.

Harry smiled. "Your last plan, I thought, was that I should ride the mare."

"Yes," returned Jewel, with some embarrassment. "You won't look so nice as grandpa does on Essex

Maid," she added, very gently, "but if it would be a *pleasure* to you, father" —

Her companions laughed so heartily that the child bored the toe of one shoe into the piazza, and well they knew the sign.

"Here," said her father hastily, "which of these delicious candies do you want, Jewel? Oh, how good they look! I tell you you 'll have to be quick if you want any. I have only till to-morrow to eat them."

"Really to-morrow, father!" returned the child, pausing aghast. "To-morrow!"

"Yes, indeed."

"To Chicago, do you mean?"

"To Chicago." He nodded emphatically.

Jewel turned appealing eyes on her mother. "Can't we help it?" she asked in a voice that broke.

"I think not, dearie. Business must come before pleasure, you know."

Her three companions looking at the child saw her swallow with an effort. She dropped the chocolate she had taken back into the box.

A heroic smile came to her trembling lips as she lifted her eyes to the impassive face of the tall, handsome man beside her. "It 's to-morrow, grandpa," she said softly, with a look that begged him to remember.

He stooped until his gaze was on a level with hers. She did not touch him. All her forces were bent on self-control.

"I have been asking your mother," said Mr. Evringham, "to stay here a while and take a vacation. Has n't she told you?"

Jewel shook her head mutely.

"I think she will do it if you add your persuasion," continued the broker quietly. "She ought to have a rest, — and of course you would stay too, to take care of her."

A flash like sunlight illumined the child's tears. Mr. Evringham expected to feel her arms thrown around his neck. Instead, she turned suddenly, and running to her father, jumped into his lap.

"Father, father," she said, "don't you want us to go with you?"

Harry cleared his throat. The little scene had moistened his eyes as well. "Am I of any consequence?" he asked, with an effort at jocoseness.

Jewel clasped him close. "Oh, father," earnestly, "you know you are; and the only reason I said you would n't look so nice on Essex Maid is that grandpa has beautiful riding clothes, and when he rides off he looks like a king in a procession. You could n't look like a king in a procession in the clothes you wear to the store, could you, father?"

"Impossible, dearie."

"But I want you to ride her if you 'd like to, and I want mother and me to go to Chicago with you if you 're going to feel sorry."

"You really do, eh?"

Jewel hesitated, then turned her head and held out her hand to Mr. Evringham, who took it. "If grandpa won't feel sorry," she answered. "Oh, I don't know what I want. I wish I did n't love to be with so many people!"

Her little face, drawn with its problem, precipitated the broker's plans and made him reckless. He said to

his son now, that which, in his carefully prepared programme, he had intended to say about three months hence, provided a nearer acquaintance with his daughter Julia did not prove disappointing.

"I suppose you are not devotedly attached to Chicago, Harry?"

The young man looked up, surprised. "Not exactly. So far she has treated me like a cross between a yellow dog and a step-child; but I shall be devoted enough if I ever succeed there."

"Don't succeed there," returned the broker curtly. "Succeed here."

Harry shook his head. "Oh, New York 's beyond me. I have a foothold in Chicago."

"Yes," returned the broker, who had the born and bred New Yorker's contempt for the Windy City. "Yes, I know you 've got your foot in it, but take it out."

"Great Scott! You 'd have me become a rolling stone again?"

"No. I 'll guarantee you a place where, if you don't gather moss, you 'll even write your*self* down as long-eared."

Harry's eyes brightened, and he straightened up, moving Jewel to one side, the better to see his father. "Do you mean it?" he asked eagerly.

The broker nodded. "Take your time to settle matters in Chicago," he said. "If you show up here in September it will be early enough."

The young man turned his eyes toward his wife and she met his smile with another. Her heart was beating fast. This powerful man of whom, until this morning,

she had stood in awe, was going to put a stop to the old life and lift their burdens. So much she perceived in a flash, and she knew it was for the sake of the little child whose cheeks were glowing like roses as she looked from one to another, taking in the happy promise involved in the words of the two men.

"Father, will you come back here?" she asked, breathing quickly.

"I 'd be mighty glad to, Jewel," he replied.

The child leaned toward the broker, to whose hand she still clung. Starry lights were dancing in her eyes.

"Grandpa, are father and mother and I going to live with you — always?" she asked rapturously.

"Always — if you will, Jewel."

He certainly had not intended to say it until autumn leaves were falling, and he should have made certain that it was not putting his head into a noose; but the child's face rewarded him now a thousand-fold, and made the moment too sweet for regret.

"Did n't we *know* that Divine Love would take care of us, grandpa?" she asked, with soft triumph. "We *did* know it — even when I was crying, we knew it. Did n't we?"

The broker drank in her upturned glance and placed his other hand over the one that was clinging to him.

CHAPTER VII

MRS. EVRINGHAM'S GIFTS

When Mrs. Evringham opened her eyes the following morning, it was with a confused sense that some great change had taken place; and quickly came the realization that it was a happy change. As the transforming facts flowed in more clearly upon her consciousness, she covered her eyes quickly with her hand.

"'Green pastures are before me!'" she thought, and her heart grew warm with gratitude.

Her husband was asleep, and she arose and went softly to Jewel's chamber, and carefully opened the door. To her amazement the bed was empty. Its coverings were stripped down and the sweet morning breeze was flooding the spacious room.

She returned to her own, wondering how late it might be. Her husband stirred and opened his eyes, but before she could speak a ripple of distant laughter sounded on the air.

She ran to the window and raised the shade. "Oh, come, Harry, quick!" she exclaimed, and, half asleep, he obeyed. There, riding down the driveway, they saw Mr. Evringham and Jewel starting off for their morning canter.

"How dear they look, how dear!" exclaimed Julia.

"Father is stunning, for a fact," remarked Harry, watching alertly. On yesterday's excursion he had

ridden Essex Maid, after all; and he smiled with interest now, in the couple who were evidently talking to one another with the utmost zest as they finally disappeared at a canter among the trees.

"It is ideal, it 's perfectly ideal, Harry." Julia drew a long breath. "I was so surprised this morning, to waken and find it reality, after all." She looked with thoughtful eyes at her husband. "I wonder what my new work will be!" she added.

"Not talking about that already, I hope!" he answered, laughing. "I 've an idea you will find occupation enough for one while, in learning to be idle. Sit still now and look about you on the work accomplished."

"What work?"

"That I 'm here and that you 're here: that the action of Truth has brought these wonders about."

After breakfast the farewells were said. "You 're , are n't you, father?" asked Jewel doubtfully, clung about his neck.

"Never so happy, Jewel," he answered.

e turned to her grandfather. "When is father g back again?" she asked.

As soon as he can," was the reply.

"You don't want me until September, I believe," said the young man bluntly. He still retained the consciousness, half amused, half hurt, that his father considered him superfluous.

"Why, September is almost next winter," said Jewel appealingly.

Mr. Evringham looked his son full in the eyes and liked the direct way they met him.

"The latchstring will be out from now on, Harry.

I want you to feel that it is your latchstring as much as mine."

His son did not speak, but the way the two men suddenly clasped hands gave Jewel a very comforted sensation.

"And you don't feel a bit sorry to be going alone to Chicago?" she pursued, again centring her attention and embrace upon her father.

"I tell you I was never so happy in my life," he responded, kissing her and setting her on her feet. "Are you going to allow me to drive to the station in your place this morning?"

"I'd let you do anything, father," returned Jewel affectionately. It touched her little heart to see him go alone away from such a happy family circle, but her mother's good cheer was reassuring.

They had scarcely had a minute alone together since Mrs. Evringham's arrival, and when the last wave had been sent toward the head leaning out of the brougham window, mother and child went up the broad staircase together, pausing before the tall clock whose chime had grown so familiar to Jewel since that chilling day when Mrs. Forbes warned her not to touch it.

"Everything in this house is so fine, Jewel," said the mother. "It must have seemed very strange to you at first."

"It did. Anna Belle and I felt more at home out of doors, because you see God owned the woods, and He did n't care if we broke something, and Mrs. Forbes used to be so afraid; but it 's all much different now," added the child.

They went on up to the room where stood the small

trunk which was all Mrs. Evringham had taken abroad for her personal belongings.

To many children the moment of their mother's unpacking after a return from a trip is fraught with pleasant and eager anticipation of gifts. In this case it was different; for Jewel had no previous journey of her mother's to remember, and her gifts had always been so small, with the shining exception of Anna Belle, that she made no calculations now concerning the steamer trunk, as she watched her mother take out its contents.

Each step Mrs. Evringham took on the rich carpet, each glance she cast at the park through the clear sheets of plate glass in the windows, each smooth-running drawer, each undreamed-of convenience in the closet with its electric light for dark days, impressed her afresh with a sense of wondering pleasure. The lady of her name who had so recently dwelt among these luxuries had accepted them fretfully, as no more than her due; the long glass which now reflected Julia's radiant dark eyes lately gave back a countenance impressed with lines of care and discontent.

"Jewel, I feel like a queen here," said the happy woman softly. "I like beautiful things very much, but I never had them before in my life. Come, darling, we must read the lesson." She closed the lid of the trunk.

"Yes, but wait till I get Anna Belle." The child ran into her own room and brought the doll. Then she jumped into her mother's lap, for there was room for all three in the big chair by the window.

Some memory made the little girl lift her shoulders. "This was aunt Madge's chair," she said. "She used to sit here in the prettiest lace wrapper — I was never in

this room before except two or three times," — Jewel's awed tone changed. — "but now my own mother lives here! and cousin Elaine would love to know it and to know that I have her room. I mean to write her about it."

"You must take me upstairs pretty soon and let me see the chamber that was yours. Oh, there is so much to see, Jewel. Shall we ever get to the end?" Mrs. Evringham's tone was joyous, as she hugged the child impulsively, and rested her cheek on the flaxen head. "Darling," she went on softly, "think what Divine Love has done for mother, to bring her here! I've worked very hard, my little girl, and though Love helped me all the time, and I was happy, I've had so much care, and almost never a day when I had leisure to stop and think about something else than my work. I expected to go right back to it now, with father, and I did n't worry, because God was leading me — but, dearie, when I woke up this morning" — she paused, and as Jewel lifted her head, mother and child gazed into one another's eyes — "I said — you know what I said?"

For answer the little girl smiled gladly and began to sing the familiar hymn. Her mother joined an alto to the clear voice, in the manner that had been theirs for years, and fervently, now, they sang the words: —

"Green pastures are before me,
Which yet I have not seen.
Bright skies will soon be o'er me,
Where darkest clouds have been.
My hope I cannot measure,
My path in life is free,
My Father has my treasure,
And He will walk with me!"

Jewel looked joyous.

"The green pastures were in Bel-Air Park, were n't they?" she said, "and you had n't seen them, had you?"

"No," returned Mrs. Evringham gently, "and just now there is not a cloud in our bright sky."

"Father 's gone away," returned Jewel doubtfully.

"Only to get ready to come back. It is very wonderful, Jewel."

"Yes, it is. I 'm sure it makes God glad to see us so happy."

"I 'm sure it does; and the best of it is that father knows that it is love alone that brought this happiness, just as it brings all the real happiness that ever comes in the world. He sees that it is only what knowledge we have of God that made it possible for him to come back to what ought to be his, his father's welcome home! Father sees that it is a demonstration of love, and that is more important than all; for anything that gives us a stronger grasp on the truth, and more understanding of its working, is of the greatest value to us."

"Did n't grandpa love father before?" asked Jewel, in surprise.

"Yes, but father disappointed him and error crept in between them, so it was only when father began to understand the truth and ask God to help him, that the discord could disappear. Is n't it beautiful that it has, Jewel?"

"I don't think discord is much, mother," declared the little girl.

"Of course it is n't," returned her mother. "It is n't anything."

"When I first came, grandpa had so many things to make him sorry, and everybody else here was sorry — and now nobody is. Even aunt Madge was happy over the pretty clothes she had to go away with."

"And she 'll be happy over other things, some day," returned Mrs. Evringham, who had already gathered a tolerably clear idea of her sister-in-law. "Eloise has learned how to help her."

"Oh, ye—es! *She* is n't afraid of discord any more."

"Now we 'll study the lesson, darling. Think of having all the time we want for it!"

After they had finished, Mrs. Evringham leaned back in the big chair and patted Jewel's knee. Opening the bag at her side she took out a small box and gave it to the child, who opened it eagerly. A bright little garnet ring reposed on the white velvet.

"Oh, oh, *oh!*" cried Jewel, delighted. She put on the ring, which just fitted, and then hugged her mother before she looked at it again.

"Dear little Anna Belle, when you 're a big girl" — she began, turning to the doll, but Mrs. Evringham interrupted.

"Wait a minute, Jewel, here is Anna Belle's."

She took out another box and, ah, what a charming necklace appeared, brilliant with gems which outshone completely the three little garnets. Jewel jumped for joy when she had clasped it about the round neck.

"Oh, mother, mother!" she exclaimed, patting her mother's cheek, "you kept thinking about us every day, did n't you! Kiss your grandma, dearie," which the proud and happy Anna Belle did with a fervor that threatened to damage Mrs. Evringham's front teeth.

"I brought you something else, Jewel," said the mother, with her arms around the child. "I did think of you every day, and on the ship going over, it was pretty hard, because I had never been away from my little girl and I did n't know just what she was doing, and I did n't even know the people she was with; so, partly to keep my thoughts from error, I began to — to make something for you."

"Oh, what was it?" asked Jewel eagerly.

"I did n't finish it going over, and I had no time to do so until we were on the steamer coming home again. Then I was lighter hearted and happier, because I knew my little darling had found green pastures, but — I finished it. I don't know how much you will care for it."

Jewel questioned the dark eyes and smiling lips eagerly.

"What is it, mother; a bag for my skates?"

"No."

"A — a handkerchief?"

"No."

"Oh, tell me, mother, I can't wait."

Mrs. Evringham put the little girl down from her lap and going to the trunk took from it the only article it still contained. It was a long, flat book with pasteboard covers tied at the back with little ribbons. As she again took her seat in the big chair, Jewel leaned against its arm.

"It 's a scrap-book full of pictures," she said, with interest.

For answer her mother turned the cover toward her so she could read the words lettered distinctly upon it.

Then Mrs. Evringham ran her finger along the edges of the volume and let the type-written pages flutter before its owner's delighted eyes.

"You 've made me some stories, mother!" cried Jewel. One of the great pleasures and treats of her life had been those rare half hours when her busy mother had time to tell her a story.

Her eyes danced with delight. "Oh, you 're the *kindest* mother!" she went on, "and you 'll have time to read them to me now! Anna Belle, won't it be the most *fun?* Oh, mother, we 'll go to the ravine to read, won't we?"

Mrs. Evringham's cheeks flushed and she laughed at the child's joy. "I hope they won't disappoint you," she said.

"But you wrote them out of love. How can they?" returned the little girl quickly.

"That 's so, Jewel; that 's so, dear."

CHAPTER VIII

THE QUEST FLOWER

THE garden in the ravine had been put into fine order to exhibit to Jewel's father and mother. Fresh ferns had been planted around the still pond where Anna Belle's china dolls went swimming, and fresh moss banks had been constructed for their repose. The brook was beginning to lose the impetuosity of spring and now gurgled more quietly between its verdant banks. It delighted Jewel that the place held as much charm for her mother as for herself, and that she listened with as hushed pleasure to the songs of birds in the treetops too high to be disturbed by the presence of dwellers on the ground. It was an ideal spot wherein to read aloud, and the early hours of that sunshiny afternoon found the three seated there by the brook-side ready to begin the Story Book.

"Now I 'll read the titles and you shall choose what one we will take first," said Mrs. Evringham.

Jewel's attention was as unwinking as Anna Belle's, as she listened to the names.

"Anna Belle ought to have first choice because she 's the youngest. Then I 'll have next, and you next. Anna Belle chooses The Quest Flower; because she loves flowers so and she can't imagine what that means."

"Very well," returned Mrs. Evringham, smiling and settling herself more comfortably against a tree

trunk. "The little girl in this story loved them too;" and so saying, Jewel's mother began to read aloud: —

THE QUEST FLOWER

Hazel Wright learned to love her uncle Dick Badger very much during a visit he made at her mother's home in Boston. She became well acquainted with him. He was always kind to her in his quiet way, and always had time to take her on his knee and listen to whatever she had to tell about her school or her plays, and even took an interest in her doll, Ella. Mrs. Wright used to laugh and tell her brother that he was a wonderful old bachelor, and could give lessons to many a husband and father; upon which uncle Dick responded that he had always been fond of assuming a virtue if he had it not; and Hazel wondered if "assuming-a-virtue" were a little girl. At any rate, she loved uncle Dick and wished he would live with them always; so it will be seen that when it was suddenly decided that Hazel was to go home with him to the town where he lived, she was delighted.

"Father and I are called away on business, Hazel," her mother said to her one day, "and we have been wondering what to do with you. Uncle Dick says he 'll take you home with him if you would like to go."

"Oh, yes, I would," replied the little girl; for it was vacation and she wanted an outing. "Uncle Dick has a big yard, and Ella and I can have fun there."

"I 'm sure you can. Uncle Dick's housekeeper, Hannah, is a kind soul, and she knew me when I was as little as you are, and will take good care of you."

The evening before Hazel and her uncle were to leave, Mrs. Wright spoke to her brother in private.

"It seems too bad not to be able to write aunt Hazel that her namesake is coming," she said. "Is she as bitter as ever?"

"Oh, yes. No change."

"Just think of it!" exclaimed Mrs. Wright. "She lives within a stone's throw of you, and yet can remain unforgiving so many years. Let me see — it is eight; for Hazel is ten years old, and I know she was two when the trouble about the property came up; but you did right, Dick, and some time aunt Hazel must know it."

"Oh, I think she has lucid intervals when she knows it now," returned Mr. Badger; "but her pride won't let her admit it. If it amuses her, it does n't hurt me for her to pass me on the street without a word or a look. When a thing like that has run along for years, it is n't easy to make any change."

"Oh, but it is so unchristian, so wrong," returned his sister. "If you only had a loving enough feeling, Dick, it seems as if you might take her by storm."

Mr. Badger smiled at some memory. "I tried once. She did the storming." He shrugged his shoulders. "I 'm a man of peace. I decided to let her alone."

Mrs. Wright shook her head. "Well, I have n't told Hazel anything about it. She knows she is named for my aunt; but she does n't know where aunt Hazel lives, and I wish you would warn Hannah not to tell the child anything about her or the affair. You know we lay a great deal of stress on not voicing discord of any kind."

"Yes, I know," Mr. Badger smiled and nodded. "Your methods seem to have turned out a mighty nice little girl, and it 's been a wonder to me ever since I came, to see you going about, such a different creature from what you used to be."

"Yes, I 'm well and happy," returned Mrs. Wright, "and I long to have this trouble between you and aunt Hazel at an end. I suppose Hazel is n't likely to come in contact with her at all."

"No, indeed; no more than if aunt Hazel lived in Kamschatka. She does, if it 's cold enough there."

"Dear woman. She ignored the last two letters I wrote her, I suppose because I sided with you."

"Oh, certainly, that would be an unpardonable offense. Hannah tells me she has a crippled child visiting her now, the daughter of some friend. Hannah persists in keeping an eye on aunt Hazel's affairs, and telling me about them. Hannah will be pleased to have little Hazel to make a pet of for a few weeks."

He was right. The housekeeper was charmed. She did everything to make Hazel feel at home in her uncle's house, and discovering that the little girl had a passion for flowers, let her make a garden bed of her own. Hazel went with her uncle to buy plants for this, and she had great fun taking geraniums and pansies out of their pots and planting them in the soft brown earth of the round garden plot; and every day blue-eyed Ella, her doll, sat by and watched Hazel pick out every little green weed that had put its head up in the night.

"You 're only grass, dearie," she would say to one as she uprooted it, "and grass is all right most everywhere; but this is a garden, so run away."

Not very far down the street was a real garden, though, that gave Hazel such joy to look at that she carried Ella there every day when it did n't rain, and would have gone every day when it did, only Hannah would n't let her.

The owner of the garden, Miss Fletcher, at the window where she sat sewing, began to notice the little stranger at last; for the child stood outside the fence with her doll, and gazed and gazed so long each time, that the lady began to regard her with suspicion.

"That young one is after my flowers, I 'm afraid, Flossie," she said one day to the pale little girl in the wheeled chair that stood near another window looking on the street.

"I 've noticed her ever so many times," returned Flossie listlessly. "I never saw her until this week, and she 's always alone."

"Well, I won't have her climbing on my fence!" exclaimed Miss Fletcher, half laying down her work and watching Hazel's movements sharply through her spectacles. "There, she 's grabbing hold of a picket now!" she exclaimed suddenly. "I 'll see to her in quick order."

She jumped up and hurried out of the room, and Flossie's tired eyes watched her spare figure as she marched down the garden path. She did n't care if Miss Fletcher did send the strange child away. What difference could it make to a girl who had the whole world to walk around in, and who could take her doll and go and play in some other pleasant place?

As Hazel saw Miss Fletcher coming, she gazed at the unsmiling face looking out from hair drawn back

in a tight knot; and Miss Fletcher, on her part, saw such winning eagerness in the smile that met her, that she modified the sharp reproof ready to spring forth.

"Get down off the fence, little girl," she said. "You ought n't ever to hang by the pickets; you 'll break one if you do."

"Oh, yes," returned Hazel, getting down quickly. "I did n't think of that. I wanted so much to see if that lily-bud had opened, that looked as if it was going to, yesterday; and it has."

"Which one?" asked Miss Fletcher, looking around.

"Right there behind that second rosebush," replied Hazel, holding Ella tight with one arm while she pointed eagerly.

"Oh, yes." Miss Fletcher went over to the plant.

"I think it is the loveliest of all," went on the little girl. "It makes me think of the quest flower."

"What 's that?" Miss Fletcher looked at the strange child curiously. "I never heard of it."

"It 's the perfect flower," returned Hazel.

"Where did you ever see it?"

"I never did, but I read about it."

"Where is it to be bought?" Miss Fletcher was really interested now, because flowers were her hobby.

"In the story it says at the Public Garden; but I 've been to the Public Garden in Boston, and I never saw any I thought were as beautiful as yours."

Hazel was not trying to win Miss Fletcher's heart, but she had found the road to it.

The care-lined face regarded her more closely than ever. "I don't remember you. I thought I knew all the children around here."

"No 'm. I 'm a visitor. I live in Boston; and we have a flat and of course there is n't any yard, and I think your garden is perfectly beautiful. I come to see it every day, and it 's fun to stand out here and count the smells."

Miss Fletcher's face broke into a smile. It did really seem as if it cracked, because her lips had been set in such a tight line. "It ain't very often children like flowers unless they can pick them," she replied. "I can't sleep nights sometimes, wishing my garden was n't so near the fence."

The little girl smiled and pointed to a climbing rose that had strayed from its trellis, and one pink flower that was poking its pretty little face between the pickets. "See that one," she said. "I think it wanted to look up and down the street, don't you?"

"And you did n't gather it," returned Miss Fletcher, looking at Hazel approvingly. "Well, now, for anybody fond of flowers as you are, I think that was real heroic."

"She belongs to nice folks," she decided mentally.

"Oh, it was a tame flower," returned the child, "and that would have been error. If it had been a wild one I would have picked it."

"Error, eh?" returned Miss Fletcher, and again her thin lips parted in a smile. "Well, I wish everybody felt that way."

"Uncle Dick lets me have a garden," said Hazel. "He let me buy geraniums and pansies and lemon verbena — I love that, don't you?"

"Yes. I 've got a big plant of it back here. Would n't you like to come in and see it?"

"Oh, thank you," returned Hazel, her gray eyes sparkling; and Miss Fletcher felt quite a glow of pleasure in seeing the happiness she was conferring by the invitation. Most of her friends took her garden as a matter of course; and smiled patronizingly at her devotion to it.

In a minute the little girl had run to the gate in the white fence, and, entering, joined the mistress of the house, who stood beside the flourishing plants blooming in all their summer loveliness.

For the next fifteen minutes neither of the two knew that time was flying. They talked and compared and smelled of this blossom and that, their unity of interest making their acquaintance grow at lightning speed. Miss Fletcher was more pleased than she had been for many a day, and as for Hazel, when her hostess went down on her knees beside a verbena bed and began taking steel hairpins from her tightly knotted hair, to pin down the luxuriant plants that they might go on rooting and spread farther, the little girl felt that the climax of interest was reached.

"I 'm going to ask uncle Dick," she said admiringly, "if I can't have some verbenas and a paper of hairpins."

"Dear me," returned Miss Fletcher, "I wish poor Flossie took as much interest in the garden as you do."

"'Flossie' sounds like a kitten, returned Hazel.

"She 's a little human kitten: a poor little afflicted girl who is making me a visit. You can see her sitting up there in the house, by the window."

Hazel looked up and caught a glimpse of a pale face.

Her eyes expressed her wonder. "Who afflicted her?" she asked softly.

"Her Heavenly Father, for some wise purpose," was the response.

"Oh, it could n't have been that!" returned the child, shocked. "You know God is Love."

"Yes, I know," replied Miss Fletcher, turning to her visitor in surprise at so decided an answer from such a source; "but it is n't for us to question what His love is. It 's very different from our poor mortal ideas. There 's something the matter with poor Flossie's back, and she can't walk. The doctors say it 's nervous and perhaps she 'll outgrow it; but I think she gets worse all the time."

Hazel watched the speaker with eyes full of trouble and perplexity. "Dear me," she replied, "if you think God made her get that way, who do you think 's going to cure her?"

"Nobody, it seems. Her people have spent more than they can afford, trying and trying. They 've made themselves poor, but nobody 's helped her so far."

Hazel's eyes swept over the roses and lilies and then back to Miss Fletcher's face. The lady was regarding her curiously. She saw that thoughts were hurrying through the mind of the little girl standing there with her doll in her arms.

"You look as if you wanted to say something," she said at last.

"I don't want to be impolite," returned Hazel, hesitating.

"Well," returned Miss Fletcher dryly, "if you knew

the amount of impoliteness that has been given to me in my time, you would n't hesitate about adding a little more. Speak out and tell me what you are thinking."

"I was thinking how wonderful and how nice it is that flowers will grow for everybody," said Hazel, half reluctantly.

"How 's that?" demanded her new friend, in fresh surprise. "Have you decided I don't deserve them?"

"Oh, you deserve them, of course," replied the child quickly; "but when you have such thoughts about God, it 's a wonder His flowers can grow so beautifully in your yard."

Miss Fletcher felt a warmth come into her cheeks.

"Well," she returned rather sharply, "I should like to know what sort of teaching you 've had. You 're a big enough girl to know that it 's a Christian's business to be resigned to the will of God. You don't happen to have seen many sick folks, I guess — what is your name?"

"Hazel."

"Why, that 's queer, so is mine; and it is n't a common one."

"Is n't that nice!" returned the child. "We 're both named Hazel and we both love flowers so much."

"Yes; that 's quite a coincidence. Now, why should n't flowers grow for me, I should like to know?"

"Why, you think God afflicted that little girl's back, and did n't let her walk. Why, Miss Fletcher," the child's voice grew more earnest, "He would n't do it any more than I 'd kneel down and break the stem of that lovely quest flower and let it hang there and wither."

Miss Fletcher pushed up her spectacles and gazed down into the clear gray eyes.

"Does Flossie think He would?" added Hazel with soft amazement.

"I suppose she does."

"Then does she say her prayers just the same?"

"Of course she does."

"What a kind girl she must be!" exclaimed Hazel earnestly.

"Why do you say that?"

"Because *I* would n't pray to anybody that I believed kept me afflicted."

Miss Fletcher started back. "Why, child!" she exclaimed, "I should think you 'd expect a thunderbolt. Where do your folks go to church, for pity's sake?"

"To the Christian Science church."

"Oh—h, that 's what 's the matter with you! Some of Flossie's relatives have heard about that, and they 've been teasing her mother to try it. I 'm sure I 'd try anything that was n't blasphemous."

"What is blasphemous?"

"Why — why — anything that is n't respectful to God is blasphemous."

"Oh!" returned Hazel. Then she added softly, "I should think you were that, now."

"What!" and Miss Fletcher seemed to tower above her visitor in her amazement.

"Oh — please excuse me. I did n't mean to be impolite; but if you 'll just *try*, you 'll find out what a mistake you and Flossie have been making, and that God *wants* to heal her."

The two looked at one another for a silent half-

minute, the little girl's heart beating faster under the grim gaze.

"You might come and see her some day," suggested Miss Fletcher, at last. "She has a dull time of it, poor child. I 've asked the children to come in, and they 've all been very kind, but it 's vacation, and a good many that I know have gone away."

"I will," replied Hazel. "Does n't she like to come out here where the flowers are?"

"Yes; it 's been a little too cloudy and threatening to-day, but if it's clear to-morrow I 'll wheel her out under the elm-tree, and she 'd like a visit from you. Are you staying far from here?"

"No, uncle Dick's is right on this street."

"What 's his last name?"

"Mr. Badger," replied Hazel, and she did n't notice the sudden stiffening that went through Miss Fletcher.

"What is your last name?" asked the lady, in a changed voice.

"Wright."

This time any one who had eyes for something beside the flowers might have seen Miss Fletcher start. Color flew into her thin cheeks, and the eyes that stared at Hazel's straw tam-o'-shanter grew dim. This was dear Mabel Badger's child; her little namesake, her own flesh and blood.

Her jaw felt rigid as she asked the next question. "Have you ever spoken to your uncle Dick about my garden?"

"Yes, indeed. That 's why he let me make one; and every night he asks, 'Well, how 's Miss Fletcher's garden to-day,' and I tell him all about it."

"And did n't he ever say anything to you about me?"

"Why, no;" the child looked up wonderingly. "He does n't know you, does he?"

"We used to know one another," returned Miss Fletcher stiffly.

Richard had certainly behaved very decently in this particular instance. At least he had told no lies.

"Hazel is such an unusual name," she went on, after a minute. "Who were you named for?"

"My mother's favorite aunt," returned the child.

"Where does she live?"

"I don't know," replied Hazel vaguely. "My mother was talking to me about her the evening before uncle Dick and I left Boston. She told me how much she loved aunt Hazel; but that error had crept in, and they could n't see each other just now, but that God would bring it all right some day. I have a lovely silver spoon she gave me when I was a baby."

Miss Fletcher stooped to her border and cut a bunch of mignonette with the scissors that hung from her belt. "Here 's something for you to smell of as you walk home," she said, and Hazel saw her new friend's hand tremble as she held out the flowers. "Do you ever kiss strangers?" added the hostess as she rose to her feet.

Hazel held up her face and took hold of Miss Fletcher's arm as she kissed her. "I think you 've been so kind to me," she said warmly. "I 've had the best time!"

"Well, pick the climbing rose as you pass," returned Miss Fletcher. "It seems to want to see the world.

Let it go along with you; and don't forget to come to-morrow. I hope it will be pleasant."

She stood still, the warm breeze ruffling the thin locks about her forehead, and watched the little girl trip along the walk. The child looked back and smiled as she stopped to pick the pink rose, and when she threw a kiss to Miss Fletcher, that lady found herself responding.

She went into the house with a flush remaining in her cheeks.

"How long you stayed, aunt Hazel," said the little invalid fretfully as she entered.

"I expect I did," returned Miss Fletcher, and there was a new life in her tone that Flossie noticed.

"Who is that girl?"

"Her name is Hazel Wright, and she is living at the Badgers'. She 's as crazy about flowers as I am, so we had a lot to say. She gave me a lecture on religion, too;" an excited little laugh escaped between the speaker's lips. "She 's a very unusual child; and she certainly has a look of the Fletchers."

"What? I thought you said her name was Wright."

"It is! My tongue slipped. She 's coming to see you to-morrow, Flossie. We must fix up your doll. I 'll wash and iron her pink dress this very afternoon; for Hazel has a beauty doll, herself. I think you 'll like that little girl."

That evening when uncle Dick and Hazel were at their supper, Mr. Badger questioned her as usual about her day.

"I 've had the most *fun*," she replied. "I 've been to see Miss Fletcher, and she took me into her garden,

and we smelled of all the flowers, and had the loveliest time!"

Hannah was standing behind the little girl's chair, and her eyes spoke volumes as she nodded significantly at her employer.

"Yes, sir, she told Miss Fletcher where she was visiting, and she gave her a bunch of mignonette and a rose to bring home."

"Yes," agreed Hazel, "they 're in a vase in the parlor now, and she asked me to come to-morrow to see an afflicted girl that 's living with her. You know, uncle Dick," Hazel lifted her eyes to him earnestly, "you know how it says everywhere in the Bible that anybody that 's afflicted goes to God and He heals them; and what do you think! Miss Fletcher and that little Flossie girl both believe God afflicted her and fixed her back so she can't walk!"

Mr. Badger smiled as he met the wondering eyes. "That is n't Christian Science, is it?" he returned.

"I 'd rather never have a garden even like Miss Fletcher's than to think that," declared Hazel, as she went on with her supper. "I feel so sorry for them!"

"So you 're going over to-morrow," said Mr. Badger. "What are you going to do; treat the little invalid?"

"Why, no indeed, not unless she asks me to."

"Why not?"

"Because it would be error; it 's the worst kind of impoliteness to treat anybody that does n't ask you to; but I 've got to know every minute that her belief is a lie, and that God does n't know anything about it."

"I thought God knew everything," said Mr. Badger, regarding the child curiously.

"He does, of course, everything that 's going to last forever and ever: everything that 's beautiful and good and strong. Whatever God thinks about has *got* to last." The child lifted her shoulders. "I 'm glad He does n't think about mistakes, — sickness, and everything like that, are n't you?"

"I don't want sickness to last forever, I 'm sure," returned Mr. Badger.

The following day was clear and bright, and early in the afternoon Hazel, dressed in a clean gingham frock, took her doll and walked up the street to Miss Fletcher's.

The wheeled chair was already out under the elm-tree, and Flossie was watching for her guest. Miss Fletcher was sitting near her, sewing, and waiting with concealed impatience for the appearance of the bright face under the straw tam-o'-shanter.

As soon as Hazel reached the corner of the fence and saw them there, she began to run, her eyes fixed eagerly on the white figure in the wheeled chair. The blue eyes that looked so tired regarded her curiously as she ran up the garden path and across the grass to the large, shady tree.

Hazel had never been close to a sick person, and something in Flossie's appearance and the whiteness of her thin hands that clasped the doll in the gay pink dress brought a lump into the well child's throat and made her heart beat.

"Dear Father, I want to help her!" she said under her breath, and Miss Fletcher noticed that she had no eyes for her, and saw the wondering pity in her face as she came straight up to the invalid's chair.

"Flossie Wallace, this is Hazel Wright," she said, and Flossie smiled a little under the love that leaped from Hazel's eyes into hers.

"I 'm glad you brought your doll," said Flossie.

"Ella goes everywhere I do," returned Hazel. "What 's your doll's name?"

"Bernice; I think Bernice is a beautiful name," said Flossie.

"So do I," returned Hazel. Then the two children were silent a minute, looking at one another, uncertain how to go on.

Hazel was the first to speak. "Is n't it lovely to live with this garden?" she asked.

"Yes, aunt Hazel has nice flowers."

"I have an aunt Hazel, too," said the little visitor.

"Miss Fletcher is n't my real aunt, but I call her that," remarked Flossie.

"And *you* might do it, too," suggested Miss Fletcher, looking at Hazel, to whom her heart warmed more and more in spite of the astonishing charges of the day before.

"Do you think I could call you aunt Hazel?" asked the child, rather shyly.

"For the sake of being cousin to my garden, you might. Don't you think so?"

"How is the quest flower to-day?" asked Hazel.

"Which? Oh, you mean the garden lily. There 's another bud."

"Oh, may I look at it?" cried Hazel, "and would n't you like to come too?" turning to Flossie. "Can't I roll your chair?"

"Yes, indeed," said Miss Fletcher, pleased. "It

rolls very easily. Give Flossie your doll, too, and we 'll all go and see the lily bud."

Hazel obeyed, and carefully pushing the light chair, they moved slowly toward the spot where the white chalices of the garden lilies poured forth their incense.

"Miss Fletcher," cried Hazel excitedly, dropping on her knees beside the bed, "that is going to be the most beautiful of all. When it is perfectly open the plant will be ready to take to the king." The little girl lifted her shoulders and looked up at her hostess, smiling.

"What king is going to get my lily?"

"The one who will send you on your quest."

"What am I to go in quest of?" inquired Miss Fletcher, much entertained.

"I don't know;" Hazel shook her head. "Every one's errand is different."

"What is a quest?" asked Flossie.

"You tell her, Hazel."

"Why, mother says it 's a search for some treasure."

"You must tell us this story about the quest flower some day," said Miss Fletcher.

"I have the story of it here," returned Hazel eagerly. "I 've read it over and over again because I love it, and so mother put it in my trunk with my Christian Science books. I can bring it over and read it to you, if you want me to. You 'd like it, I know, Miss Fletcher."

"Aunt Hazel told me you were a Christian Scientist," said Flossie. "I never saw one before, but people have talked to mother about it."

"I could bring *those* books over, too," replied Hazel

wistfully, "and we could read the lesson every day, and perhaps it would make you feel better."

"I don't know what it 's about," said Flossie.

"It 's about making sick people well and sinful people good."

"I 'm sinful, too, part of the time," answered Flossie. "Sometimes I don't like to live, and I wish I did n't have to, and everybody says that 's sinful."

Sudden tears started to Miss Fletcher's eyes, and as the little girls were looking at one another absorbedly, Hazel standing close to the wheeled chair, she stole away, unobserved, to the house.

"She ought to be cured," she said to herself excitedly. "She ought to be cured. There 's that one more chance, anyway. I 've got to where I 'm ready to let the babes and sucklings have a try!"

CHAPTER IX

THE QUEST FLOWER (*Continued*)

THE next morning was rainy, and Jewel and her grandfather visited the stable instead of taking their canter.

"And what will you do this dismal day?" asked the broker of his daughter-in-law as they stood alone for a minute after breakfast, Jewel having run upstairs to get Anna Belle for the drive to the station.

"This happy day," she answered, lifting to him the radiant face that he was always mentally contrasting with Madge. "The rain will give me a chance to look at the many treasures you have here, books and pictures."

"H'm. You are musical, I know, for Jewel has the voice of a lark. Do you play the piano?"

Julia looked wistfully at the Steinway grand. "Ah, if I only could!" she returned.

Mr. Evringham cleared his throat. "Madam," he said, lowering his voice, "that child has a most amazing talent."

"Jewel's voice, do you mean?"

"She 'll sing, I 'm sure of it," he replied, "but I mean for music in general. Eloise is an accomplished pianist. She has one piece that Jewel especially enjoyed, the old Spring Song of Mendelssohn. Probably you know it."

Julia shook her head. "I doubt it. I 've heard very little good piano playing."

"Well, madam, that child has picked out the melody of that piece by herself," the broker lowered his voice to still deeper impressiveness. "As soon as we return in the autumn, we will have her begin lessons."

Julia's eyes met his gratefully.

"A very remarkable talent. I am positive of it," he went on. "Jewel," for here the child entered the room, "play the Spring Song for your mother, will you?"

"Now? Zeke is out there, grandpa."

"Dick can stretch his legs a bit faster this morning. Play it."

So Jewel set Anna Belle on a brocaded chair and going to the piano, played the melody of the Spring Song. She could perform only a few measures, but there were no false notes in the little chromatic passages, and her grandfather's eyes sought Julia's in grave triumph.

"A very marvelous gift," he managed to say to her again under his breath, as Jewel at last ran ahead of him out to the porte cochère.

Julia's eyes grew dreamy as she watched the brougham drive off. How different was to be the future of her little girl from anything she had planned in her rosiest moments of hopefulness.

The more she saw of Mr. Evringham's absorbed attachment to the child, the more grateful she was for the manner in which he had guarded Jewel's simplicity, the self-restraint with which he had abstained from loading her with knickknacks or fine clothes. The child was not merely a pet with him. She was an individual, a character whose development he respected.

"God keep her good!" prayed the mother.

It was a charming place to continue the story, there

in the large chintz chair by Mrs. Evringham's window. The raindrops pattered against the clear glass, the lawn grew greener, and the great trees beyond the gateway held their leaves up to the bath.

"Anna Belle's pond will overflow, I think," said Jewel, looking out the window musingly.

"And how good for the ferns," remarked her mother.

"Yes, I'd like to be there, now," said the child.

"Oh, I think it's much cosier here. I love to hear the rain, too, don't you?"

"Yes, I do, and we'll have the story now, won't we, mother?"

At this moment there was a knock at the door and Zeke appeared with an armful of birch wood.

"Mr. Evringham said it might be a little damp up here and I was to lay a fire."

"Oh, yes, yes!" exclaimed Jewel. "Mother, would n't you like to have a fire while we read?"

Mrs. Evringham assented and Zeke laid the sticks on the andirons and let Jewel touch the lighted match to the little twigs.

"I have the loveliest book, Zeke," she said, when the flames leaped up. "My mother made it for me, and you shall read it if you want to."

"Yes, if Zeke wants to," put in Mrs. Evringham, smiling, "but you'd better find out first if he does. This book was written for little girls with short braids."

"Oh, Zeke and I like a great many of the same things," responded Jewel earnestly.

"That's so, little kid," replied the young coachman, "and as long as you're going to stay here, I'll read anything you say."

"You see," explained Jewel, when he had gone out and closed the door softly, "Zeke said it made his nose tingle every time he thought of anybody else braiding Star's tail, so he 's just as glad as anything that we 're not going away."

The birch logs snapped merrily, and Anna Belle sat in Jewel's lap watching the leaping flame, while Mrs. Evringham leaned back in her easy chair. The reading had been interrupted yesterday by the arrival of the hour when Mrs. Evringham had engaged to take a drive with her father-in-law. Jewel accompanied them, riding Star, and it was great entertainment to her mother to watch the child's good management of the pretty pony who showed by many shakes of the head and other antics that it had not been explained to his satisfaction why Essex Maid was left out of this good time.

Jewel turned to her mother. "We 're all ready now, are n't we? Do go on with the story. I told grandpa about it, driving to the station this morning, and what do you suppose he asked me?" The child drew in her chin. "He asked me if I thought Flossie was going to get well!"

Mrs. Evringham smiled. "Well, we 'll see," she replied, opening the story-book. "Where were we?"

"Miss Fletcher had just gone into the house and Flossie had just said she was sinful. She was n't to blame a bit!"

"Oh, yes, here it is," said Mrs. Evringham, and she began to read: —

As Hazel met Flossie's look, her heart swelled and she wished her mother were here to take care of this little girl who had fallen into such a sad mistake.

"I wish I knew how to tell you better, Flossie, about God being Love," she said; "but He is, and He did n't send you your trouble."

"Perhaps He did n't send it," returned Flossie, "but He thinks it 's good for me to have it or else He 'd let the doctors cure me. I 've had the kindest doctors you ever heard of, and they know everything about people's backs."

"But God will cure you, Himself," said Hazel earnestly.

A strange smile flitted over the sick child's lips. "Oh, no, He won't. I asked Him every night for a year, and over and over all day; but I never ask Him now."

"Oh, Flossie, I know what 's the truth, but I don't know how to tell about it very well; but everything about you that seems not to be the image and likeness of God is a lie; and He does n't see lies, and so He does n't know these mistakes you 're thinking; but He *does* know the strong, well girl you really are, and He 'll help *you* to know it, too, when you begin to think right."

The sincerity and earnestness in her visitor's tone brought a gleam of interest into Flossie's eyes.

"Just think of being well and running around here with me, and think that God wants you to!"

"Oh, do you believe He does?" returned Flossie doubtfully. "Mother says it will do my soul good for me to be sick, if I can't get well."

Hazel shook her head violently. "You know when Jesus was on earth? Well, he never told anybody it was better for them to be sick. He healed everybody,

everybody that asked him, and he came to do the will of his Father; so God's will does n't change, and it 's just the same now."

There was a faint color in Flossie's cheeks. "If I was sure God wanted me to get well, why then I 'd know I would some time."

"Of course He does; but you did n't know how to ask Him right."

"Do *you?*" asked Flossie.

Hazel nodded. "Yes; not so well as mother, but I do know a little, and if you want me to, I 'll ask Him for you."

"Well, of course I do," returned Flossie, regarding her visitor with grave, wondering eyes.

In a minute Miss Fletcher, watching the children through a window, beheld something that puzzled her. She saw Hazel roll Flossie's chair back under the elm-tree, and saw her sit down on the grass beside it and cover her eyes with both hands.

"What game are they playing?" she asked herself; and she smiled, well pleased by the friendship that had begun. "I wish health was catching," she sighed. "Little Hazel 's a picture. I wonder how long it 'll be before she finds out who I am. I wonder what Richard's idea is in not telling her."

She moved about the house a few minutes, and then returned, curiously, to the window. To her surprise matters were exactly as she saw them last. Flossie was holding both dolls in the wheeled chair, and Hazel was sitting under the tree, her hands over her eyes.

A wave of amazement and amusement swept over Miss Fletcher, and she struck her hands together noise-

lessly. "I *do* believe in my heart," she exclaimed, "that Hazel Wright is giving Flossie one of those absent treatments they tell about! Well, if I ever in all my born days!"

There was no more work for Miss Fletcher after this, but a restless moving about the room until she saw Hazel bound up from the ground. Then she hurried out of the house and walked over to the tree. Hazel skipped to meet her, her face all alight. "Oh, Miss Fletcher, Flossie wants to be healed by Christian Science. If my mother was only here she could turn to all the places in the Bible where it tells about God being Love and healing sickness."

Miss Fletcher noted the new expression in the invalid's usually listless face, and the new light in her eyes.

"I 'll take my Bible," she answered, "and a concordance. I 'll bring them right now. You children go on playing and I 'll find all the references I can, and Flossie and I will read them after you 've gone."

Miss Fletcher brought her books out under the tree, and with pencil and paper made her notes while the children played with their dolls.

"Let 's have them both your children, Flossie," said Hazel.

"Oh, yes," replied Flossie, "and they 'll both be sick, and you be the doctor and come and feel their pulses. Aunt Hazel has my doll's little medicine bottles in the house. She 'll tell you where they are."

Hazel paused. "Let 's not play that," she returned, "because — it is n't fun to be sick and — you 're going to be all done with sickness."

"All right," returned Flossie; but it had been her

principal play with her doll, Bernice, who had recovered from such a catalogue of ills that it reflected great credit on her medical man.

"I 'll be the maid," said Hazel, "and you give me the directions and I 'll take the children to drive and to dancing-school and everywhere you tell me."

"And when they 're naughty," returned Flossie, "you bring them to me to spank, because I can't let my servants punish my children."

Hazel paused again. "Let 's play you 're a Christian Scientist," she said, "and you have a Christian Science maid, then there won't be any spanking; because if error creeps in, you 'll know how to handle it in mind."

"Oh!" returned Flossie blankly.

But Hazel was fertile in ideas, and the play proceeded with spirit, owing to the lightning speed with which the maid changed to a coachman, and thence to a market-man or a gardener, according to the demands of the situation.

Miss Fletcher, her spectacles well down on her nose, industriously searched out her references and made record of them, her eyes roving often to the white face that was fuller of interest than she had ever seen it.

When four o'clock came, she went back to the house and returned with Flossie's lap table, which she leaned against the tree trunk. This afternoon lunch for the invalid was always accomplished with much coaxing on Miss Fletcher's part, and great reluctance on Flossie's. The little girl took no notice now of what was coming. She was too much engrossed in Hazel's efforts to induce Miss Fletcher's maltese cat to allow Bernice to take a ride on his back.

But when the hostess returned from the house the second time, Hazel gave an exclamation. Miss Fletcher was carrying a tray, and upon it was laid out a large doll's tea-set. It was of white china with gold bands, and when Flossie saw Hazel's admiration, she exclaimed too.

"This was my tea-set when I was a little girl," said Miss Fletcher, "and I was always very choice of it. Twenty years ago I had a niece your age, Hazel, who used to think it was the best fun in the world to come to aunt Hazel's and have lunch off her doll's tea-set. I used to tell her I was going to give it to *her* little girl if she ever had one."

Both children exclaimed admiringly over the quaint shape of the bowl and pitchers, as Miss Fletcher deposited the tray on her sewing-table.

"When I was a child we did n't smash up handsome toys the way children do nowadays. They were n't so easy to get."

"And did n't your niece ever have a little girl?" asked Flossie, beginning to think that in such a case perhaps these dear dishes might come to be her own.

"Yes, she did," replied Miss Fletcher kindly, and as she looked at the guest's interested little face her eyes were thoughtful. "I shall give them to her some day."

"Has she ever seen them?" asked Hazel.

"Once. I thought you children must be hungry after your games, and you 'd like a little lunch."

This idea was so pleasing to Hazel that Flossie caught her enthusiasm.

"You 'll be the mistress and pour, Flossie, and I 'll

be the waitress," she said. "Won't it be the most *fun!* I suppose, ma'am, you 'll like to have the children come to the table?" she added, with sudden respectfulness of tone.

"Yes," returned Flossie, with elegant languor. "I think it teaches them good manners."

And then the waitress forgot herself so far as to hop up and down; for Miss Fletcher, who had returned to the house, now reappeared bearing a tray of eatables and drinkables.

What a good time the children had, with the sewing-table for a sideboard, and the lap-table fixed firmly across Flossie's chair.

"Are you sure you are n't getting too tired, dear?" asked Miss Fletcher of her invalid, doubtfully. "Would n't you rather the waitress poured?"

But Flossie declared she was feeling well, and Hazel looked up eagerly into Miss Fletcher's eyes and said, "You know she can't get too tired unless we 're doing wrong."

"Oh, indeed!" returned the hostess dryly. "Then there 's nothing to fear, for she 's doing the rightest kind of right."

When the table was set forth, two small plates heaped high with bread-and-butter sandwiches, a coffee-pot and milk-pitcher of beaten egg and milk, a tea-pot of grape juice, one dish of nuts and another of jelly, the waitress's eyes spoke so eloquently that Flossie mercifully dismissed her on the spot, and invited a lady of her acquaintance to the feast, who immediately drew up a chair with eager alacrity.

Miss Fletcher seated herself again and looked on

with the utmost satisfaction, while the children laughed and ate, and when the sandwich plates and coffee-pot and tea-pot and milk-pitcher were all emptied, she replenished them from the well-furnished sideboard.

"My, I wish I was aunt Hazel's real little niece!" exclaimed Flossie, enchanted with pouring from the delightful china.

"So do I wish I was," said Hazel, looking around at her hostess with a smile that was returned.

When Hazel sat down to supper at home that evening, she had plenty to tell of the delightful afternoon, which made Mr. Badger and Hannah open their eyes to the widest, although she did not suspect how she was astonishing them.

"I tell you," she added, in describing the luncheon, "we were careful not to break that little girl's dishes. Oh, I wish you could see them. They 're the most be-*au*tiful you ever saw. They 're so big — big enough for a child's real ones that she could use herself."

"I judge you did use them," said uncle Dick.

"Well, I guess we did! Miss Fletcher — she wants me to call her aunt Hazel, uncle Dick!" The child looked up to observe the effect of this.

He nodded. "Do it, then. Perhaps she 'll forget and give you the dishes."

Hazel laughed. "Well, anyway, she said Flossie 'd eaten as much as she usually did in two whole days. Is n't it beautiful that she 's going to get well?"

"I would n't talk to her too much about it," returned Mr. Badger. "It would be cruel to disappoint her."

This sort of response was new to Hazel. She gazed at her uncle a minute. "That 's error," she said at last.

"God does n't disappoint people. They 'll get some grown-up Scientist, but until they do, I 'll declare the truth for Flossie every day. She 'll get well. You 'll see."

"I hope so," returned Mr. Badger quietly.

Old Hannah gave her employer a wink over the child's head. "You might ask them to come here by your garden and have lunch some day, Hazel. I 'll fix things up real nice for you, even if we have n't got any baby dishes."

"I 'd love to," returned Hazel, "and I expect they 'd love to come. To-morrow I 'm going to take the lesson over and read it with them, and I 'm going to read them the 'Quest Flower,' too. It 's a story that aunt Hazel will just love. I think she has one in her yard."

"Well, Mr. Richard," said Hannah, after their little visitor had gone to bed, "I see the end of one family feud."

Mr. Badger smiled. "When Miss Fletcher consents to take lunch in my yard, I shall see it, too," he replied.

The next day was pleasant, also, and when Hazel appeared outside her aunt's fence, Flossie was sitting under the tree and waved a hand to her. The white face looked pleased and almost eager, and Miss Fletcher called: —

"Come along, Hazel. I guess Flossie got just tired enough yesterday. She slept last night the best she has since she came."

"Yes," added the little invalid, smiling as her new friend drew near, "the night seemed about five minutes long."

"I WISH I WAS AUNT HAZEL'S REAL LITTLE NIECE!"

"That 's the way it does to me," returned Hazel. She had her doll and some books in her arms, and Miss Fletcher took the latter from her.

"H'm, h'm," she murmured, as she looked over the titles. "You have something about Christian Science here."

"Yes, I thought I 'd read to-day's lesson to Flossie before I treated her, and you 'd let us take your Bible."

"I certainly will. I can tell you, Hazel, Flossie and I were surprised at the number of good verses and promises I read to her last evening. Anybody ought to sleep well after them."

Hazel looked glad, and Miss Fletcher let her run into the house to bring the Bible, for it was on the hall table in plain sight.

While she was gone the hostess smoothed Flossie's hair. "I can tell you, my dear child, that reading all those verses to you last night made me feel that we don't any of us live up to our lights very well. 'T is n't always a question of sick bodies, Flossie."

Hazel came bounding back to the elm-tree, and sitting down near the wheeled chair, opened the Bible and two of the books she had brought, and proceeded to read the lesson. Had she been a few years older, she would not have attempted this without a word of explanation to two people to whom many of the terms of her religion were strange, but no doubts assailed her. The little white girl in the wheeled chair was going to get out of it and run around and be happy — that was all Hazel knew, and she proceeded in the only way she knew of to bring it about.

Miss Fletcher's thin lips parted as she listened to the sentences that the child read. She understood scarcely more than Flossie of what they were hearing, excepting the Bible verses, and these did not seem to bear on the case. It was Hazel's perfectly unhesitating certainty of manner and voice which most impressed her, and when the child had finished she continued to stare at her unconsciously.

"Now," said Hazel, returning her look, "I guess I 'd better treat her before we begin to play."

Her hostess started. "Oh!" she ejaculated, "then I suppose you 'd rather be alone."

"Yes, it 's easier," returned the little girl.

Miss Fletcher, feeling rather embarrassed, gathered up her sewing and moved off to the house.

"If I ever in all my born days!" she thought again. "What would Flossie's mother say! Well, that dear little girl's prayers can't do any harm, and if she is n't a smart young one I never saw one. She 's Fletcher clear through. I 'd like to know what Richard Badger thinks of her. If she 'd give *him* a few absent treatments it might do him some good."

Miss Fletcher's lips took their old grim line as she added this reflection, but she was not altogether comfortable. Her nephew's action in withholding from Hazel the fact that it was her aunt whom she was visiting daily could scarcely have other than a kindly motive; and that long list of Bible references which she had read to Flossie last evening had stirred her strangely. There was one, "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love," which had followed her to bed and occupied her thoughts for some time.

Now she went actively to work preparing the luncheon which she intended serving to the children later.

"And I 'd better fix enough for two laboring men," she thought, smiling.

Later, when she went back under the tree, her little guest skipped up to her. "Oh, aunt Hazel," she said, and the address softened the hostess's eyes, "won't you and Flossie come to-morrow afternoon if it 's pleasant, and have lunch beside my garden?"

Miss Fletcher's face changed. This was a contingency that had not occurred to her.

"Oh, do say yes," persisted the child. "I want you to see my flowers, and Flossie says she 'd love to. I 'll come up and wheel her down there."

"Flossie can go some day, yes," replied aunt Hazel reluctantly; "but I don't visit much. I 'm set in my ways."

"Hannah, uncle Dick's housekeeper, suggested it herself," pursued Hazel, thinking that perhaps her own invitation was not sufficient, "and I know uncle Dick would be glad. You said," with sudden remembrance, "that you used to know him."

Miss Fletcher's lips were their grimmest. "I 've spanked him many a time," she replied deliberately.

"Spanked him!" repeated the child, staring in still amazement.

The grim lips crept into a grimmer smile. "Not very hard; not hard *enough*, I 've thought a good many times since."

Hazel recovered her breath. "You knew him when he was little?"

"I certainly did. No, child, don't ask me to go out of my tracks. You come here all you will, and if you 'll be very careful you can wheel Flossie up to your garden some day. Come, now, are you going to read us that story? I see you brought it."

"Yes, I brought it," replied Hazel, in a rather subdued voice. She saw that there was some trouble between this kind, new friend and her dear uncle Dick, and the discovery astonished her. How could grown-up people not forgive one another?

Miss Fletcher seated herself again with her sewing, and Hazel took the little white book and sat down close by the wheeled chair where Flossie was holding both the dolls.

"Do you like stories?" she asked.

"Yes, when they 're not interesting," returned Flossie; "but when mother brings a book and says it 's very interesting, I know I shan't like it."

Hazel laughed. "Well, hear this," she said, and began to read: —

Once there was a very rich man whose garden was his chief pride and joy. In all the country around, people knew about this wonderful garden, and many came from miles away to look at the rare trees and shrubs, and the beautiful vistas through which one could gain glimpses of blue water where idle swans floated and added their snowy beauty to the scene. But loveliest of all were the rare flowers, blossoming profusely and rejoicing every beholder.

It was the ambition of the man's life to have the most beautiful garden in the world; and so many strangers

as well as friends told him that it was so that he came to believe it and to be certain that no beauty could be added to his enchanting grounds.

One evening, as he was strolling about the avenues, he strayed near the wall and suddenly became aware of a fragrance so sweet and strange that he started and looked about him to find its source. Becoming more and more interested each moment, as he could find only such blossoms as were familiar to him, he at last perceived that the wonderful perfume floated in from the public way which ran just without the wall.

Instantly calling a servant he dispatched him to discover what might be the explanation of this delightful mystery.

The servant sped and found a youth bearing a jar containing a plant crowned with a wondrous pure white flower which sent forth this sweetness.

The servant endeavored to bring the bearer to his master, but the youth steadily refused; saying that, the plant being now in perfection, he was carrying it to the King, for in his possession it would never fade.

The servant returning with this news, the owner of the garden hastened, himself, and overtook the young man. When his eyes beheld the wondrous plant, he demanded it at any price.

"I cannot part with it to you," returned the youth, "but do you not know that at the Public Garden a bulb of this flower is free to all?"

"I never heard of it," replied the man, with excitement, "but to grow it must be difficult. Promise me to return and tend it for me until I possess a plant as beautiful as yours."

"That would be useless," returned the youth, "for every man must tend his own; and as for me, the King will send me on a quest when He has received this flower, and I shall not return this way."

His face was radiant as he proceeded on his road, and the rich man, filled with an exceeding longing, hastened to the Public Garden and made known his desire. He was given a bulb, and was told that the King provided it, but that when the plant was in flower it must be carried to Him.

The man agreed, and returning to his house, rejoicing, caused the bulb to be planted in a beautiful spot set apart for its reception.

But, strangely, as time went on, his gardeners could not make this plant grow. The man sent out for experts, men with the greatest wisdom concerning the ways of flowers, but still the bulb rested passive. The man offered rewards, but in vain. His garden was still famous and praised for its beauty far and near; but it pleased him no longer. His heart ached with longing for the one perfect flower.

One night he lay awake, mourning and restless until he could bear it no more. He rose, the only waking figure in the sleeping castle, and went out upon a balcony. A flood of moonlight was turning his garden to silver, and suddenly a nightingale's sobbing song pulsed upon the air and filled his heart to bursting.

Wrapping his mantle about him, he descended a winding stair and walked to where, in the centre of the garden, reposed his buried hope. No one was by to witness the breaking down of his pride. He knelt, and swift tears fell upon the earth and moistened it.

What wonder was this? He brushed away the blinding drops, the better to see, for a little green shoot appeared from the brown earth, and, with a leap of the heart, he perceived that his flower had begun to grow.

Every succeeding night, while all in the castle were sleeping, he descended to the garden and tended the plant.

Steadily it grew, and finally the bud appeared, and one fair day it burst into blossom and filled the whole garden with its perfume.

The thought of parting with this treasure tugged at the man's very heartstrings. "The King has many, how many, who can tell! Must I give up mine to Him? Not yet. Not quite yet!"

So he put off carrying away the perfect flower from one day to the next, till at last it fell and was no more worthy.

Ah, then what sadness possessed the man's soul! He vowed that he would never rest until he had brought another plant to perfection and given it to the King; for he realized, at last, that only by giving it, could its loveliness become perennial. Yet he mourned his perfect flower, for it seemed to him no other would ever possess such beauty.

So he set forth again to the Public Garden, but there a great shock awaited him. He found that no second bulb could be vouchsafed to any one. Very sadly he retraced his steps and carefully covered the precious bulb, hoping that when the season of storm and frost was past, there might come to it renewed life.

As soon as the spring began to spread green loveliness again across the landscape, the man turned, with

a full heart, to the care and nurture of his hope. The winter of waiting had taught him many a lesson.

He tended the plant now with his own hands, in the light of day and in the sight of all men. Long he cherished it, and steadily it grew, and the man's thought grew with it. Finally the bud appeared, increasing and beautifying daily, until, one morning, a divine fragrance spread beyond the farthest limits of that garden, for the flower had bloomed, spotless, fit for a holy gift; and the man looked upon it humbly and not as his own; but rejoiced in the day of its perfection that he might leave all else behind him, and, carrying it to the King, lay it at His feet and receive His bidding; and so go forth upon his joyous quest.

Hazel closed the book. Flossie was watching her attentively. Miss Fletcher had laid down her sewing and was wiping her spectacles.

"Did you like it?" asked Hazel.

"Yes," replied Flossie. "I wish I knew what that flower was."

"Mother says the blossom is consecration," replied Hazel. "I forget what she said the bulb was. What do you think it was, aunt Hazel?"

"Humility, perhaps," replied Miss Fletcher.

"Yes, that 's just what she said! I remember now. Oh, let 's go and look at yours and see how the bud is to-day." Hazel sprang up from the grass and carefully pushed Flossie's chair to the flower-bed.

"Oh, aunt Hazel, it 's nearly out," she cried, and Miss Fletcher, who had remained behind still polishing her spectacles with hands that were not very steady,

felt a little frightened leap of the heart. She wished the Quest Flower would be slower.

The afternoon was as happy a one to the children as that of the day before. They greatly enjoyed the dainty lunch from the little tea-set. They had cocoa to-day instead of the beaten egg and milk; then, just before Hazel went home, Miss Fletcher let her water the garden with a fascinating sprinkler that whirled and was always just about to deluge either th one who managed it or her companions.

In the child's little hands it was a dangerous we[illegible]on, but Miss Fletcher very kindly and patiently helped her to use it, for she saw the pleasure she was bestowing.

That night Hazel had a still more joyous tale to tell of her happy day; and uncle Dick went out doors with her after supper and watched her water her own garden bed and listened to her chatter with much satisfaction.

"So Miss Fletcher does n't care to come and lunch in my yard," he remarked.

"No," returned Hazel, pausing and regarding him. "She says she used to know you well enough to spank you, too."

Mr. Badger laughed. "She certainly did."

"Then error must have crept in," said the little girl, "that she does n't know you now."

"I used to think it had, when she got after me."

The child observed his laughing face wistfully. "She did n't know how to handle it in mind, did she?"

"Not much. A slipper was good enough for her."

"Well, I don't see what 's the matter," said Hazel.

It is n't necessary, little one. You go on having a good time. Everything will come out all right some day."

As Mr. Badger spoke he little knew what activity was taking place in his aunt's thought. Her heart had been touched by the surprising arrival and sympathy of her namesake, and her conscience had been awakened by the array of golden words from the Bible which she had not studied much during late bitter years. The story of the Quest Flower, falling upon her softened heart, seemed to hold for her a special meaning.

In the late twilight that evening she stood alone in her garden, and the opening chalice of the perfect lily shone up at her through the dusk. "Only a couple of days, at most," she murmured, "not more than a couple of days — and humility was the root!"

When it rained the following morning, Flossie looked out the window rather disconsolately; but after dinner her face brightened, for she saw Hazel coming up the street under an umbrella. Tightly held in one arm were Ella and a bundle of books and doll's clothes. Miss Fletcher welcomed the guest gladly, and, after disposing of her umbrella, left the children together and took her sewing upstairs where she sat at work by a window, frowning and smiling by turns at her own thoughts.

Occasionally she looked down furtively at her garden, where in plain view the quest flower drank in the warm rain and opened — opened!

By this time Flossie and Hazel were great friends, and the expression of the former's face had changed

even in three days, until one would forget to call her an afflicted child.

They had the lesson and the treatment this afternoon, and then their plays, and when lunch time came the appetites of the pair did not seem to have been injured by their confinement to the house.

When the time came for Hazel to go it had ceased raining, and Miss Fletcher went with her to the gate.

"Oh, oh, aunt Hazel — see the quest flower!" exclaimed the child.

True, a lily, larger, fairer than all the rest, reared itself in stately purity in the centre of the bed.

Miss Fletcher turned and looked at it with startled eyes and pressed her hand to her heart. "Why can't the thing give a body time to make up her mind!" she murmured.

"Oh, to-morrow, *to-morrow*, aunt Hazel, the sun will come out, and I know just how that lily will look. It will be fit to take to the King!"

Miss Fletcher passed her arm around the child's shoulders. "I want you to stay to supper with us to-morrow night, dear. Ask your uncle if you may."

"Thank you, I 'd love to," returned the child, and was skipping off.

"Wait a minute." Miss Fletcher stooped and with her scissors cut a moss rose so full of sweetness that as she handed it to her guest, Hazel hugged her.

The following day was fresh and bright. Flossie's best pink gown and hair ribbons made her look like a rose, herself, to Hazel, as the little girl, very fine in a white frock and ribbons, came skipping up the street. Miss Fletcher stood watching them as her niece ran

toward the wheeled chair. The lustre in Flossie's eyes made her heart glad; but the visitor stopped short in the midst of the garden and clasped her hands.

"Oh, aunt Hazel!" she cried, "the quest flower!"

Miss Fletcher nodded and slowly drew near. The stately lily looked like a queen among her subjects.

"Yes, it is to-day," she said softly, "to-day."

She could not settle to her sewing, but, leaving the children together for their work and play, walked up and down the garden paths. Later she went into the house and upstairs and put on her best black silk dress. An unusual color came into her cheeks while she dressed. "The bulb was humility," she murmured over and over, under her breath.

The afternoon was drawing to a close when Miss Fletcher at last moved out of doors and to the elm-tree. "I did n't bring you any lunch to-day," she said to the children, "because I want you to be hungry for a good supper."

"Can we have the dishes just the same?" asked Flossie.

"The owner is going to have them to-night," replied Miss Fletcher, and both the little girls regarded her flushed face with eager curiosity.

"Why, have you asked her?" they cried together.

"Yes."

"Does she know she 's going to have the tea-set?"

"No."

"Oh, what fun!" exclaimed Flossie. "I did n't know she was in town."

"Yes, she is in town." Miss Fletcher turned to Hazel and put her hand on the child's shoulder. "We

must do everything we can to celebrate taking the flower to the King."

Only then the children noticed that aunt Hazel had her bonnet on.

"Oh," cried the child, bewildered, "are you going to *do* it?"

Miss Fletcher met her radiant eyes thoughtfully. "If I should take the flower of consecration to the King, Hazel, I know what would be the first errand He would give me to do. I am going to do it now. Go on playing. I shan't be gone long."

She moved away down the garden path and out of the gate.

"What do you suppose it is?" asked Flossie.

"I don't know," returned Hazel simply. "Something right;" and then they took up their dolls again.

Miss Fletcher did not return very soon. In fact, nearly an hour had slipped away before she came up the street, and then a man was with her. As they entered the gate Hazel looked up.

"Uncle Dick, uncle Dick!" she cried gladly, jumping up and running to meet him. He and Miss Fletcher both looked very happy, as they all moved over to Flossie's chair. Mr. Badger's kind eyes looked down into hers and he carried her into the house in his strong arms. Hazel followed, rolling the chair and having many happy thoughts; but she did not understand even a litt of the situation until they all went into the dining-room and Flossie was carefully seated in the place the hostess indicated.

The white and gold tea-set was not in front of Flossie this time, but grouped about another place. Hazel's

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quick eyes noted that there were four seats, but before she had time to speak of the expected child — happy owner of the tea-set — uncle Dick spoke: —

"Where do I go, aunt Hazel?"

The child's eyes widened at such familiarity. "Why, uncle Dick!" she ejaculated.

He and the hostess both regarded her, smiling.

"She is my aunt," he said; and then he lifted Hazel into the chair before the pretty china. "I believe these are your dishes," he added.

The child leaned back in her chair and looked from one to another. Slowly, slowly, she understood. That was the aunt Hazel who gave her the silver spoon. It had been aunt Hazel all the time! She suddenly jumped down from her chair, and, running to Miss Fletcher, hugged her without a word.

Aunt Hazel embraced her very tenderly. "Yes, my lamb," she whispered, "error crept in, but it has crept out again, I hope forever;" and through the wide-open windows came the perfume of the quest flower: pure, strong, beautiful, — radiantly white in the evening glow.

Before Hazel went back to Boston, Flossie's mother came to Miss Fletcher's, and the change for the better in her little daughter filled her with wonder and joy. With new hope she followed the line of treatment suggested by a little girl, and by the time another summer came around, two happy children played again in aunt Hazel's garden, both as free as the sweet air and sunshine, for Divine Love had made Flossie "every whit whole."

CHAPTER X

THE APPLE WOMAN'S STORY

JEWEL told her grandfather all about it that day while they were having their late afternoon ride.

"And so the little girl got well," he commented.

"Yes, and could run and play and have the most *fun!*" returned Jewel joyously.

"And aunt Hazel made it up with her nephew."

"Yes. Why don't people know that all they have to do is to put on more love to one another? Just supposing, grandpa, that you had n't loved me so much when I first came."

"H'm. It *is* fortunate that I was such an affectionate old fellow!"

"Mother says we all have to tend the flower and carry it to the King before we 're really happy. Do you know it made us both think of the same thing when at last the man did it."

"What was that?"

"Our hymn: —

> 'My hope I cannot measure,
> My path in life is free,
> My Father has my treasure
> And He will walk with me!'

Don't you begin to love mother very much, grandpa?"

"She is charming."

"Of course she is n't your real relation, the way I am."

"Oh, come now. She 's my daughter."

Jewel smiled at him doubtfully. "But so is aunt Madge," she returned.

"Why, Jewel, I 'm surprised that any one who looks so tall as you do in a riding skirt should n't know more than that! Mrs. Harry Evringham is *your* mother."

"I never thought of that," returned the child seriously. "Why, so she is."

"That brings her very close, very close, you see," said Mr. Evringham, and his reasoning was clear as daylight to Jewel.

At dinner that evening she was still further reassured. The child did not know that the maids in the house, having been scornfully informed by aunt Madge of Mrs. Harry's business, were prepared to serve her grudgingly, and regard her visit as being merely on sufferance despite Mrs. Forbes's more optimistic view. But the spirit that looked out of Mrs. Evringham's dark eyes and dwelt in the curves of her lips came and saw and conquered. Jewel had won the hearts of the household, and already its unanimous voice, after the glimpses it had had of her mother during two days, was that it was no wonder.

Even the signs of labor that appeared in Julia's pricked fingers made the serenity of her happy face more charming to her father-in-law. She had Jewel's own directness and simplicity, her appreciation and enjoyment of all beauty, the child's own atmosphere of unexacting love and gratitude. Every half hour that Mr. Evringham spent with her lessened his regret at having burned his bridges behind him.

"Now, you must n't be lonely here, Julia," he said,

that evening at dinner. "I have come to be known as something of a hermit by choice; but while Madge and Eloise lived with me, I fancy they had a good many callers, and they went out, to the mild degree that society smiles upon in the case of a recent widow and orphan. They were able to manage their own affairs; but you are a stranger in a strange land. If you desire society, give me a hint and I will get it for you."

"Oh, no, father!" replied Julia, smiling. "There is nothing I desire less."

"Mother 'll get acquainted with the people at church," said Jewel, "and I know she 'll love Mr. and Mrs. Reeves. They 're grandpa's friends, mother."

"Yes," remarked Mr. Evringham, busy with his dinner, "some of the best people in Bel-Air have gone over to this very strange religion of yours, Julia. I shan't be quite so conspicuous in harboring two followers of the faith as I should have been a few years ago."

"No, it is becoming quite respectable," returned Julia, with twinkling eyes.

"Three, grandpa, you have three here," put in Jewel. "You did n't count Zeke."

Mrs. Evringham looked up kindly at Mrs. Forbes, who stood by, as usual, in her neat gown and apron.

"Zeke is really in for it, eh, Mrs. Forbes?" Mr. Evringham asked the question without glancing up.

"Yes, sir, and I have no objection. I 'm too grateful for the changes for the better in the boy. If Jewel had persuaded him to be a fire worshiper I should n't have lifted my voice. I 'd have said to myself, 'What 's a little more fire here, so long as there 'll be so much less hereafter.'"

Mrs. Evringham laughed and the broker shook his head. "Mrs. Forbes, Mrs. Forbes, I 'm afraid your orthodoxy is getting rickety," he said.

"How about your own, father?" asked Julia.

"Oh, I 'm a passenger. You see, I know that Jewel will ask at the heavenly gate if I can come in, and if they refuse, they won't get her, either. That makes me feel perfectly safe."

Jewel watched the speaker seriously. Mr. Evringham met her thoughtful eyes.

"Oh, they 'll want you, Jewel. Don't you be afraid."

"I 'm not afraid. How could I be? But I was just wondering whether you did n't know that you 'll have to do your own work, grandpa."

He looked up quickly and met Julia's shining eyes.

"Dear me," he responded, with an uncomfortable laugh. "Don't I get out of it?"

The next morning when Jewel had driven back from the station, and she and her mother had studied the day's lesson, they returned to the ravine, taking the Story Book with them.

Before settling themselves to read, they counted the new wild flowers that had unfolded, and Jewel sprinkled them and the ferns, from the brook.

"Did you ever see anybody look so pretty as Anna Belle does, in that necklace?" exclaimed Jewel, fondly regarding her child, enthroned against the snowy trunk of a little birch-tree. "It is n't going to be your turn to choose the story this morning, dearie. Here, I 'll give you a daisy to play with."

"Wait, Jewel, I think Anna Belle would rather see it growing until we go, don't you?"

"Would you, dearie? Yes, she says she would; but when we go, we 'll take the sweet little thing and let it have the fun of seeing grandpa's house and what we 're all doing."

"It seems such a pity, to me, to pick them and let them wither," said Mrs. Evringham.

"Why, I think they only seem to wither, mother," replied Jewel hopefully. "A daisy is an idea of God, is n't it?"

"Yes, dear."

"When one seems to wither and go out of sight, we only have to look around a little, and pretty soon we see the daisy idea again, standing just as white and bright as ever, because God's flowers don't fade."

"That 's so, Jewel," returned the mother quietly.

The child drew a long breath. "I 've thought a lot about it, here in the ravine. At first I thought perhaps picking a violet might be just as much error as killing a bluebird; and then I remembered that we pick the flower for love, and it does n't hurt it nor its little ones; but nobody ever killed a bird for love."

Mrs. Evringham nodded.

"Now it 's my turn to choose," began Jewel, in a different tone, settling herself near the seat her mother had taken.

Mrs. Evringham opened the book and again read over the titles of the stories.

"Let 's hear 'The Apple Woman's Story,'" said Jewel, when she paused.

Her mother looked up. "Do you remember good old Chloe, who used to come every Saturday to scrub for me? Well, something she told me of an experience she

once had, when she was a little girl, put the idea of this tale into my head; and I 'll read you

THE APPLE WOMAN'S STORY

Franz and Emilie and Peter Wenzel were little German children, born in America. Their father was a teacher, and his children were alone with him except for the good old German woman, Anna, who was cook and nurse too in the household. She tried to teach Franz and Emilie to be good children, and took great care of Peter, the sturdy three-year-old boy, a fat, solemn baby, whose hugs were the greatest comfort his father had in the world.

Franz and Emilie had learned German along with their English by hearing it spoken in the house, and it was a convenience at times, for instance, when they wished to say something before the colored apple woman which they did not care to have her understand; but the apple woman did not think they were polite when they used an unknown tongue before her.

"Go off fum here," she would say to them when they began to talk in German. "None o' that lingo round my stand. Go off and learn manners." And when Franz and Emilie found she was in earnest they would ask her to forgive them in the politest English they were acquainted with; for they were very much attached to the clean, kind apple woman, whose stand was near their father's house. They admired her bright bandana headdress and thought her the most interesting person in the world. As for the apple woman, she had had so many unpleasant experiences with teasing

children that she did not take Franz and Emilie into her favor all at once, but for some time accepted their pennies and gave them their apples when they came to buy, watching them suspiciously with her sharp eyes to make sure that they were not intending to play her any trick.

But even before they had become regular customers she decided under her breath that they were "nice chillen;" and when she came to know them better her kind heart overflowed to them.

One morning as they smiled and nodded to her on the way to school, she called out and beckoned.

"Apples for the little baskets?"

"Not to-day," answered Emilie.

She beckoned to them again with determination, and the children approached.

"We forgot to brush our teeth last night," explained Franz, "so we have n't any penny."

"I forgot it," said Emilie, "and Franz did n't remind me, so we neither of us got it. That 's the way Anna makes us remember."

"Never you mind, honey, here 's apples for love," replied the colored woman, holding up two rosy beauties.

The children looked at one another and shook their heads.

"Thank you," said Emilie, "but we can't. Papa said the last time you gave them to us that if we ate your apples without paying for them we must n't come to visit you any more."

"Now think o' that!" exclaimed the apple woman when the children had gone on. She was much touched and pleased to know that Franz and Emilie would rather

come and sit and talk to her and listen to her stories than to eat her apples.

She was right; they were nice children; but they had their naughty times, and good old Anna was often greatly troubled by them. She felt her responsibility of the whole family very deeply, and tried to talk no more German. These children must grow up to be good Americans, and she must not hold them back. It was very hard for the poor woman to remember always to speak English, and funny broken English it was; so that little Peter, hearing it all the time, had a baby talk of his own that was very comical and different from other children. He talked about the "luckle horse" he played with, and the "boomps" he got when he fell down, and he was very brave and serious, as became a fat baby boy who had to take care of himself a great deal.

Anna was so busy cooking and mending for a family of five she was very glad of the hours when Mr. Wenzel worked at home at his desk and baby Peter could stay in the same room with him and play with his toys.

Mr. Wenzel was a kind father and longed as far as possible to fill the place of mother also to his children, who loved him dearly. To little Peter he was all-powerful. A kiss from papa soothed the hardest "boomp" that his many tumbles gave him; but even Peter realized that when papa was at his desk he was very busy indeed, and though any of the children might sit in the room with him, they must not speak unless it was absolutely necessary.

Emilie was now eight years old, and she might have helped her father and Anna more than she did; but she

"WE HAVE N'T ANY PENNY"

never thought of this. She loved to read, especially fairy stories, and she often curled up on the sofa in her father's room and read while Peter either played about the room with his toys, or went to papa's desk and stood with his round eyes fixed on Mr. Wenzel's face until the busy man would look up from his papers and ask: "What does my Peter want?"

Especially did Emilie fly to this refuge in papa's room after a quarrel with Franz, and I 'm sorry to say she had a great many. The apple woman found out that the little brother and sister were not always amiable. Anna had confided in her; and then one day the children approached her stand contradicting each other, their voices growing louder and louder as they came, until at last Franz made a face at Emilie, giving her a push, and she, quick as a kitten, jumped forward and slapped him.

What Franz would have done after this I don't know, if the apple woman had n't said, "Chillen, chillen!" so loud that he stopped to look at her.

"Ah, listen at that fairy Slap-back a-laughin'!" cried the apple woman.

"The fairy Flapjack?" asked Franz, as he and his sister forgot their wrath and ran toward the stand.

"*Flapjack!*" repeated the apple woman with scorn, as the children nestled down, one each side of her. "Yo' nice chillen pertendin' not to know yo' friends!"

"What friends? What?" asked Emilie eagerly.

"The fairy Slap-back. P'raps I did n't see her jest now, a-grinnin' over yo' shoulder."

"Is she anybody to be afraid of?" asked Emilie, big-eyed.

"To be sho' she is if you-all go makin' friends with her," returned the apple woman, with a knowing sidewise nod of her head. Then drawing back from the children with an air of greatest surprise, "You two don't mean to come here tellin' me you ain't never heerd o' the error-fairies?" she asked.

"Never," they both replied together.

"Shoo!" exclaimed the apple woman. "If you ain't the poor igno'antest w'ite chillen that ever lived. Why, if you ain't never heerd on 'em, yo 're likely to be snapped up by 'em any day in the week as you was jest now."

"Oh, tell us. Do tell us!" begged Franz and Emilie.

"Co'se I will, 'case 't ain't right for them mis'able creeturs to be hangin' around you all, and you not up to their capers. Fust place they 're called the error-fairies 'case they 're all servants to a creetur named Error. She 's a cheat and a humbug, allers pertendin' somethin' or other, and she makes it her business to fight a great and good fairy named Love. Now Love — oh, chillen, my pore tongue can't tell you of the beauty and goodness o' the fairy Love! She 's the messenger of a great King, and spends her whole time a-blessin' folks. Her hair shines with the gold o' the sun; her eyes send out soft beams; her gown is w'ite, and when she moves 't is as if forget-me-nots and violets was runnin' in little streams among its folds. Ah, chillen," the apple woman shook her head, "she 's the blessin' o' the world. Her soft arms are stretched out to gather in and comfort every sorrowin' heart.

"Well, 'case she was so lovely an' the great King

trusted her, Error thought she 'd try her hand; but she had n't any king, Error had n't. There wa'n't nobody to stand for her or to send her on errands. She was a low-lifed, flabby creetur," the apple woman made a scornful grimace; "jest a misty-moisty nobody; nothin' to her. Her gown was a cloud and she wa'n't no more 'n a shadder, herself, until she could git somebody to listen to her. When she did git somebody to listen to her, she 'd begin to stiffen up and git some backbone and git awful sassy; so she crep' around whisperin' to folks that Love was no good, and 'lowin' that she — that mis'able creetur — was the queen o' life.

"Some folks knowed better and told her so, right pine blank, an' then straight off she 'd feel herself changin' back into a shadder, an' sail away as fast as she could to try it on somebody else. She was ugly to look at as a bad dream, but yet there was lots o' folks would pay 'tention to her, and after they 'd listened once or twice, she kep' gittin' stronger and pearter, an' as she got stronger, they got weaker, and every day it was harder fer 'em to drive her off, even after they 'd got sick of her.

"Then, even if she did n't have a king, she had slaves; oh, dozens and dozens of error-fairies, to do her will. Creepin' shadders they was, too, till somebody listened to 'em and give 'em a backbone. There 's — let me see" — the apple woman looked off to jog her memory — "there 's Laziness, Selfishness, Backbitin', Cruelty — oh, I ain't got time to tell 'em all; an' not one mite o' harm in one of 'em, only for some silly mortal that listens and gives the creetur a backbone. They jest lop over an' melt away, the whole batch of 'em,

when Love comes near. She knows what no-account humbugs they are, you see; and they jest lop over an' melt away whenever even a little chile knows enough to say 'Go off fum here, an' quit pesterin'!'"

Franz and Emilie stared at the apple woman and listened hard. Their cheeks matched the apples.

"What happened a minute ago to you-all? An error-creetur named Slap-back whispered to you. 'Quarrel!' says she. What 'd you do? Did you say 'Go off, you triflin' vilyun'?

"Not a bit of it. You quarreled; an' Slap-back kep' gittin' bigger and stronger and stiffer in the backbone while you was goin' it, an' at last up comes this little hand of Emilie's. Whack! That was the time Slap-back could n't hold in, an' she jest laughed an' laughed over yo' shoulder. Ah, the little red eyes she had, and the wiry hair! And that other one, the fairy, Love, she was pickin' up her w'ite gown with both hands an' flyin' off as if she had wings. Of course you did n't notice her. You was too taken up with yo' friend."

"But Slap-back is n't our friend," declared Emilie earnestly.

The apple woman shook her head. "Bless yo' heart, honey, it 's mean to deny it now; but, disown her or not, she 'll stick to you and pester you; and you 'll find it out if ever you try to drive her off. You 'll have as hard a time as little Dinah did."

"What happened to Dinah?" asked Franz, picking up the apple woman's clean towel and beginning to polish apples.

"Drop that, now, chile! Yo' friend might cast her eye on it. I don't want to sell pizened apples."

Franz, crestfallen, obeyed, and glanced at Emilie. They had never before found their assistance refused, and they both looked very sober.

"Little Dinah was a chile lived 'way off down South 'mongst the cotton fields; and that good fairy watched over Dinah, — Love, so sweet to look at she 'd make yo' heart sing.

"Dinah had a little brother, too, jest big enough to walk; an' a daddy that worked from mornin' till night to git hoe-cake 'nuff fer 'em all; and his ole mammy, she helped him, and made the fire, and swept the room, and dug in the garden, and milked the cow. She was a good woman, that ole mammy, an' 't was a great pity there wa'n't nobody to help 'er, an' she gittin' older every day."

"Why, there was Dinah," suggested Emilie.

The apple woman stared at her with both hands raised. "Dinah! Lawsy massy, honey, the only thing that chile would do was look at pictur' books an' play with the other chillen. She would n't even so much as pick up baby Mose when he tumbled down an' barked his shin. Oh, but she was a triflin' lazy little nigger as ever you see."

"And that 's why the red-eyed fairy got hold of her," said Franz, who was longing to hear something exciting.

"'T was, partly," said the apple woman. "You see there 's somethin' very strange about them fairies, Love and the error-fairies. The error-fairies, they run after the folks that love themselves, and Love can only come near them that loves other people. Sounds queer, honey, but it 's the truth; so, when Dinah got to be a

likely, big gal, and never thought whether the ole mammy was gittin' tired out, or tried to amuse little Mose, or gave a thought o' pity to her pore daddy who was alone in the world, the fairy Love got to feelin' as bad as any fairy could.

"'Do, Dinah,'" she said, with her sweet mouth close to Dinah's ear, 'do stop bein' so triflin', and stir yo'-self to be some help in the house.'

"'No,' says Dinah, 'I like better to lay in the buttercups and look at pictur's,' says she.

"'Then,' says Love, 'show Mose the pictur's, too, and make him happy.'

"'No,' says Dinah, 'he 's too little, an' he bothers me an' tears my book.'

"'Then,' says Love, 'yo 'd rather yo' tired daddy took care o' the chile after his hard day's work.'

"'Now yo 're talkin',' says Dinah. 'I shorely would. My daddy 's strong.'

"The tears came into Love's eyes, she felt so down-hearted. 'Yo' daddy needs comfort, Dinah,' she says, 'an' yo 're big enough to give it to him,' says she; 'an' look at the black smooches on my w'ite gown. They 're all because o' you, Dinah, that I 've been friends with so faithful. I 've got to leave you now, far enough so 's my gown 'll come w'ite; but if you call me I 'll hear, honey, an' I 'll come. Good-by.'

"'Good riddance!' says Dinah. 'I 'm right down tired o' bein' lectured,' says she. 'Now I can roll over in the buttercups an' sing, an' be happy an' do jest as I please.'

"So Dinah threw herself down in the long grass and, bing! she fell right atop of a wasp, and he was so scared

at such capers he stung her in the cheek. Whew! You could hear her 'way 'cross the cotton field!

"Her ole gran'mam comforted her, the good soul. 'Never you mind, honey,' she says, 'I 'll swaje it fer you.'

"But every day Dinah got mo' triflin'. She pintedly would n't wash the dishes, nor mind little Mose; an' every time the hot fire o' temper ran over her, she could hear a voice in her ear — 'Give it to 'em good. That 's the way to do it, Dinah!' An' it kep' gittin' easier to be selfish an' to let her temper run away, an' the cabin got to be a mighty pore place jest on account o' Dinah, who 'd ought to ha' been its sunshine.

"As for the fairy, Love, Dinah never heerd her voice, an' she never called to her, though there was never a minute when she did n't hate the sound o' that other voice that had come to be in her ears more 'n half the time.

"One mornin' everything went wrong with Dinah. Her gran'mam was plum mis'able over her shif'less ways, an' she set her to sew a seam befo' she could step outside the do'. The needle was dull, the thread fell in knots. Dinah's brow was mo' knotted up than the thread. Her head felt hot.

"'Say you won't do it,' hissed the voice.

"'I 'll git thrashed if I do. Gran'mam said so.'

"'What do you care!' hissed the voice; and jest as the fairy Slap-back was talkin' like this, up comes little Mose to Dinah, an' laughs an' pulls her work away.

"Then somethin' awful happened. Dinah could n't 'a' done it two weeks back; but it 's the way with them that listens to that mis'able, low-lifed Slap-back. Jest as

quick as a wink, that big gal, goin' on nine, slapped baby Mose. He was that took back for a minute that he did n't cry; but the hateful voice laughed an' hissed an' laughed again.

"'Good, Dinah, good! Now you 'll ketch it!'

"Then over went little Mose's lip, an' he wailed out, an' Dinah clasped her naughty hands an' saw a face close to her — a bad one, with red eyes shinin'. She jumped away from it, for it made her cold to think she 'd been havin' sech a playfeller all along.

"'Oh, Love, y' ain't done fergit me, is yer? Come back, Love, *Love!*' she called; then she dropped on her knees side o' Mose an' called him her honey an' her lamb, an' she cried with him, an' pulled him into her lap, an' when the ole gran'mam come in from where she 'd been feedin' the hens, they was both asleep."

Franz took a long breath, for the way the apple woman told a story always made him listen hard. "I guess that was the last of old Slap-back with Dinah," he remarked.

The apple woman shook her head. "That 's the worst of that fairy," she said. "Love 'll clar out when you tell 'er to, 'case she 's quality, an' she 's got manners; but Slap-back ain't never had no raisin'. She hangs around, an' hangs around, an' is allers ;attin' in her say jest as she was a few minutes ago with you and Emilie in the road there. There 's nothin' in this world tickles her like a chile actin' naughty, 'ceptin' it 's two chillen scrappin'. Now pore little Dinah found she had to have all her wits about her to keep Love near, an' make that ornery Slap-back stay away. Love was as willin', as willin' to stay as violets is to

open in the springtime; but when Dinah an' Slap-back was both agin her, what could she do? An' Dinah, she 'd got so used to Slap-back, an' that bodacious creetur had sech a way o' gittin' around the chile, sometimes, 'fore Dinah knew it, she 'd be listenin' to 'er ag'in; but Dinah 'd had one good scare an' she did n't mean to give in. Jest now, too, her daddy fell sick. That good man, that lonely man, he 'd had a mighty hard time of it, an' no chile to care or love 'im."

"Wait," interrupted Emilie sternly. "If you are going to let Dinah's father die, I 'm going home."

The apple woman showed the whites of her eyes in the astonished stare she gave her.

"Because" — Emilie swallowed and then finished suddenly — "because it would n't be nice."

The apple woman looked straight out over her stand. "Well, he did n't, an' Dinah made him mighty glad he got well, too; for she stopped buryin' her head in pictur' books, an' she did errands for gran'mam without whinin', an' she minded Mose so her daddy had mo' peace when he come home tuckered out; an' when she 'd got so she could smile at the boy in the next cabin, 'stead o' runnin' out her tongue at him, the fairy, Love, could stay by without smoochin' her gown, an' Slap-back had to melt away an' sail off to try her capers on some other chile."

"But you need n't pretend you saw her with us," said Franz uneasily.

The apple woman nodded her red bandana wisely. "Folks that lives outdoors the way I do, honey, sees mo' than you-all," she answered.

Emilie ran home ahead of her brother, and softly entered her father's room. He was at his desk, as was usual at this hour. His head leaned on his hand, and he was so deep in his work that he did not notice her quiet entrance. She curled up on the sofa in her usual attitude, but instead of reading she watched little Peter on the floor building his block house. His chubby hands worked carefully until the crooked house grew tall, then in turning to find a last block he bumped his head on the corner of a chair.

Emilie watched him rub the hurt place in silence. Then he got up on his fat legs and went to the desk, where he stood patiently, his round face very red and solemn, while he waited to gain his father's attention.

At last the busy man became conscious of the child's presence, and, turning, looked down into the serious eyes.

"I 'm here wid a boomp," said Peter. Then after receiving the consolation of a hug and kiss he returned contentedly to his block house.

Emilie saw her father look after the child with a smile sad and tender. Her heart beat faster as she lay in her corner. Her father was lonely and hard worked, with no one to take pity on him. A veil seemed to drop from her eyes, even while they grew wet.

"I don't believe I 'm too old to change, even if I am going on nine," thought Emilie. At that minute the block house fell in ruins, and Peter, self-controlled though he was, looked toward the desk and began to whimper.

"Peter — Baby," cried Emilie softly, leaning forward and holding out the picture of a horse in her book.

Her father had turned with an involuntary sigh, and seeing Peter trot toward the sofa and Emilie receive him with open arms, went back to his papers with a relief that his little daughter saw. Her breath came fast and she hugged the baby. Something caught in her throat.

"Oh, papa, you don't know how many, *many* times I 'm going to do it," she said in the silence of her own full heart.

And Emilie kept that unspoken promise.

CHAPTER XI

THE GOLDEN DOG

"I THINK, after all, the ravine is the nicest place for stories," said Jewel the next day.

The sun had dried the soaked grass, and not only did the leaves look freshly polished from their bath, but the swollen brook seemed to be turning joyous little somersaults over its stones when Mrs. Evringham, Jewel, and Anna Belle scrambled down to its bank.

"I don't know that we ought to read a story every day," remarked Mrs. Evringham. "They won't last long at this rate."

"When we finish we 'll begin and read them all over again," returned Jewel promptly.

"Oh, that 's your plan, is it?" said Mrs. Evringham, laughing.

Jewel laughed too, for sheer happiness, though she saw nothing amusing about such an obviously good plan. "Are n't we getting well acquainted, mother?" she asked, nestling close to her mother's side and forgetting Anna Belle, who at once lurched over, head downward, on the grass. "Do you remember what a little time you used to have to hold me in your lap and hug me?"

"Yes, dearie. Divine Love is giving me so many blessings these days I only pray to bear them well," replied Mrs. Evringham.

"Why, I think it 's just as *easy* to bear [illegible] mother," began Jewel, and then she noticed her [illegible] plight. "Darling Anna Belle, what are you doing," she exclaimed, picking up the doll and brushing her dress. "I should n't think you had any more backbone than an error-fairy! Now don't look sorry, dearie, because to-day it 's your turn to choose the story."

Anna Belle, her eyes beaming from among her tumbled curls, at once turned happy and expectant, and when her hat had been straightened and her boa removed so that her necklace could gleam resplendently about her fair, round throat, she was seated against a tree-trunk and listened with all her ears to the titles Mrs. Evringham offered.

After careful consideration, she made her choice, and Mrs. Evringham and Jewel settling themselves comfortably, the former began to read aloud the tale of —

THE GOLDEN DOG

If it had not been for the birds and brooks, the rabbits and squirrels, Gabriel would have been a very lonely boy.

His older brothers, William and Henry, did not care for him, because he was so much younger than they, and, moreover, they said he was stupid. His father might take some interest in him when he grew bigger and stronger and could earn money; but money was the only thing Gabriel's father cared for, and when the older brothers earned any they tried to keep it a secret from the father lest he should take it away from them. Gabriel had a stepmother, but she was a sorry woman,

care to be companionable. So he sought his
es among the wild things in the woods, to get
from the quarrels at home.

He was a muscular, rosy-cheeked lad, and in the sports at school he could out-run and out-jump the other boys and was always good-natured with them; but even the children at the little country school did not like him very well, because the very things they enjoyed the most did not amuse him.

He tried to explain to them that the birds were his friends, and therefore he could not rob their nests; but they laughed at him almost as much as when he tried to dissuade them from mocking old Mother Lemon, as they passed her cottage door on their way to and from school.

She was an old cross-patch, of course, they told him, or else she would not live alone on the edge of a forest, with nobody but a cat and owls for company.

"Perhaps she would be glad to have some one better for company," Gabriel replied.

"Go live with her, yourself, then, Gabriel," said one of the boys tauntingly. "That 's right! Go leave your miser father, counting his gold all night while you are asleep, and too stingy to give you enough to eat, and go and be Mother Lemon's good little boy!" and then all the children laughed and hooted at Gabriel, who walked up to the speaker and knocked him over on the grass with such apparent ease and such a calm face, that all the laughers grew silent from mere surprise.

"You must n't talk about my father to me," said Gabriel, explaining. Then he started for home, and the laughing began again, softly.

"It was true," he thought, as he trudged along. Things were getting worse at home, and sometimes he was hungry, for there was not too much on the table, and his big brothers fought for their share.

As he neared Mother Lemon's cottage, with its thatched roof and tiny windows, he saw the old woman, in her short gown, tugging at the well-sweep. It seemed very hard for her to draw up the heavy bucket.

Instantly Gabriel ran forward.

"Get out of here, now," cried the old woman, in a cracked voice, for she saw it was one of the school-children, and she was weary of their worrying tricks.

"Shan't I pull up the bucket for you?" asked Gabriel.

"Ah, I know you. You want to splash me!" returned Mother Lemon, eying him warily; but the boy put his strong arm to the task, and the dripping bucket rose from the depths, while the little old woman withdrew to a safer distance.

"Show me where to put it and I will carry it into the house for you," said Gabriel.

"Now bless your rosy cheeks, you 're an honest lad," said Mother Lemon gratefully; but she took the precaution to walk behind him all the way, lest he should still be intending to play her some trick. When, however, he had entered the low door and filled the kettle and the pans, according to her directions, she smiled on him, and as she thanked him, she asked him his name.

"Gabriel," said the lad.

"Ah," she exclaimed, "you are the miser's boy."

Gabriel could not knock Mother Lemon down, so he only hung his head while his cheeks grew redder.

"It is n't your fault, child, and by the time you are grown you will be rich. When that time comes, I pray you be kinder to me than your father is, for he oppresses the poor and makes me pay my last shilling for the rent of this hovel."

"I would give the cottage to you if it were mine," returned Gabriel, looking straight into her eyes with his honest gray ones; "but at present I am poorer than you."

"In that case," said Mother Lemon, "I wish I had something worthy to reward you for your kindness to me. As I have not, here is a penny that you must keep to remember me by." And in spite of Gabriel's protestations she took from her side-pocket a coin.

"I cannot take it from you," protested the boy.

"No one ever grew richer by refusing to give," returned Mother Lemon, and she tucked the penny inside Gabriel's blouse and turned him out the door with her blessing; so that, being a peaceable boy of few words, he objected no longer, but moved along the road toward home, for it was nearly dinner time.

He found his stepmother setting the table, and his father busily calculating with figures on a bit of paper.

"Get the water, Gabriel, and be quick now," was his welcome from the sorry-faced woman.

When he had done all she directed him, there was still a little time, for William and Henry had not come in from the field. Gabriel sat down near his father and, noting a rusty, dusty little book lying on the table, he picked it up.

"What is this, father?" he asked, for there were few books in that house.

The man looked up from his figuring and sneered. "It is called by some the Book of Life," he said. "As a matter of fact it would not bring two shillings."

So saying he returned to his pleasant calculations and Gabriel idly opened the book. His gaze widened, for the verse on which his eyes fell stood out from the others in tiny letters of flame.

"*The love of money is the root of all evil*," he read.

"Father, father," he exclaimed, "what wonder is this? Look!" The miser turned, impatient of a second interruption. "See the letters of fire!"

"I see nothing. You grow stupider every day, Gabriel."

"But the letters burn, father," and then the boy read aloud the sentence which for him stood out so vividly on the page.

They had a surprising effect upon his listener. The miser grew pale and then red with anger. He rose and, standing over the boy, frowned furiously. "I 'll teach you to reprove your father," he cried. "Get out of my house. No dinner for you to-day."

The stepmother had heard what Gabriel read, and well she knew the truth of those words.

As the astonished boy gathered himself up and moved out the door, she went after him, calling in pretended sharpness; but when he came near, she whispered, "Come to the back of the shed in five minutes," and when Gabriel obeyed, later, he found there a thick piece of bread and a lump of cheese.

These he took, hungrily, and ate them in the forest before returning to school. He had never felt so kindly

toward school as this afternoon. Were it not for what he learned there, he could not have read the words in the Book of Life; and although they had brought him into trouble, he would not have foregone the wonder of seeing the living, burning characters which his father could not perceive. He longed to open those dusty covers once again.

On his way home that afternoon he met two boys teasing a small brown dog. Its coat was stuck full of burrs and it tried in vain to escape from its tormentors. The boys stopped to let Gabriel go by, for they had a wholesome respect for his strong right arm and they knew his love for animals. The trembling little dog looked at him in added fear.

Gabriel stood still. "Will you give me that dog?" he asked.

The boys backed away with their prize. "Nothing for nothing," said the taller, who had the animal under his arm. "What 'll you give us?"

Gabriel thought. Never lived a boy with fewer possessions. Ah! He suddenly remembered a whistle he had made yesterday. Diving his hand into his pocket he brought it out and whistled a lively strain upon it.

"This," he said, approaching. "I 'll give you this."

"That for one of us," replied the tall boy. "What for the other?"

From the moment the dog heard Gabriel's voice, its eyes had appealed to him. Now it struggled to get free, and the big boy struck it. Its cry sharpened Gabriel's wits.

"The other shall have a penny," he said, and drew Mother Lemon's coin out of his blouse.

The big boy dropped the dog, and he and his companion struggled for the coin, each willing the other should have the whistle. Gabriel lost no time in catching up the dog and making off with it.

He did not stop running until he had reached a spot by the brookside, hidden amid sheltering trees. Here he sat down and looked over the forlorn specimen in his lap. The dog was a rough, dingy object from its long ears to its tail.

First of all, Gabriel set to work to get out the burrs that stuck fast in the thick coat. This took a long time, but the little dog licked his hands gratefully now and then, showing that he understood, even if the operation was not always pleasant.

"Now, comrade," said Gabriel, at last, "you 'll have to stand a ducking."

The dog's beautiful golden eyes looked at him trustfully, and Gabriel, placing him in the brook, scrubbed him well, long ears and all, and then raced around with him in the warm air until he was dry.

What a transformation was there! Gabriel's eyes shone as he looked at his purchase. The dog's long hair, which had been a dingy brown, shone now like golden silk in the sunshine, and his eyes gleamed with the light of topazes as they fixed lovingly on Gabriel's happy face; for Gabriel *was* happy, as every one is who sees Love work what is called a miracle, but what is really not a miracle at all, but just one of the beautiful, happy changes for the better that follow on Love, wherever she goes. The boy's lonely heart leaped at the idea that at last he had a companion.

A despised little suffering dog had altered into a

welcome playmate, too attractive, perhaps, to keep; for Gabriel well knew that he would never be permitted to take the dog home; and any one finding him now in the woods could carry him into town and get a good price for him.

"What shall I call you, little one?" asked the boy. "My word, but you are lively," for the dog was bounding about so that his ears flew and flapped around like yellow curls.

"Topaz, you shall be!" cried Gabriel, suddenly realizing how gem-like were the creature's eyes; "and now listen to me!"

To his amazement, as the boy said "Listen," and raised his finger, Topaz at once sat up on his hind legs with his dainty white forepaws hung in front of him.

"Whew!" and Gabriel began whistling a little tune in his amazement, and the instant the dog heard the music he began to dance. What a sight was there! Gabriel's eyes grew round as he saw Topaz advance and retreat and twirl, occasionally nodding and tossing his head until his curls bobbed. He seemed to long, in his warm little dog's heart, to show Gabriel that he had been worth saving.

But the radiance died from the boy's face and he sank at last on the ground under a tree, looking very dejected.

Topaz bounded to his lap and Gabriel pulled the long silky ears through his hands thoughtfully.

"I thought I had found a companion," he said sadly.

"Bow-wow," responded Topaz.

"But you are a trick dog, worth nobody knows how much money, and I cannot keep you!"

"Bow-wow," said Topaz.

"To-morrow I must begin to try to find your master. Meanwhile what am I to do with you?" The boy rose as he spoke and Topaz showed plainly that there was no doubt in *his* mind as to what should be done with him, for he meant to stick closely to Gabriel's heel.

The boy suddenly had an idea and began to trudge sturdily off in the direction of Mother Lemon's cottage, Topaz following close. The memory of the latter's recent mishaps was too clear in his doggish mind to make him willing that a single bush should come between him and his protector.

When they reached the little cottage, Mother Lemon sat spinning outside her low doorway.

"Welcome, my man," she said when she finally saw, by squinting into the sunlight, who it was that approached, "but drive off that dog."

"Look at him, Mother Lemon," said Gabriel, rather sadly. "Saw you ever one so handsome?"

"Looks are deceiving," returned the old woman, "and I have a cat."

"I will see that he does not hurt your cat. I have to confess that I spent your penny for him, Mother Lemon."

"Then I have to confess that you are no worthy son of your father," returned the old woman, "for he would not have spent it for anything."

"I know it was a keepsake," replied Gabriel, "but the dog was in danger of his life and I had no other money to give for him."

"You are a good-hearted lad," said Mother Lemon, going on with her spinning. "Now take your dog away,

for if my cat, Tommy, should see him it might go hard with his golden locks."

"Alas, Mother Lemon, I have come to ask you to keep him for me."

"La, la! I tell you I could not keep him any longer than until Tommy laid eyes on him; neither have I any liking for dogs, myself, though that one, I must say, looks as if he had taken a bath in molten gold."

"Does he not!" returned Gabriel. "When first I saw him some boys were misusing him and he seemed to be but a brown cur with a dingy, matted coat; and I could wish that he had turned out to be of no account, for the look in his eyes took hold upon my heart; but I rubbed him well in the brook, and now see the full, feathery tail and silky ears. He is a dog of high degree."

"Certain he is, lad," replied the old woman. "Take him to the town and sell him to some lofty dame who has nothing better to do than brush his curls."

"I would never sell him," said Gabriel, regarding the dog wistfully. "He is lonely and so am I. We would stick together if we might."

"What prevents? Do you fear to take him home lest your father boil him down for his gold?" and Mother Lemon laughed as she spun.

"No. My father, I know, would not give him one night's lodging, and in my perplexity I bethought me to ask you the favor," and Gabriel's honest eyes looked so squarely at Mother Lemon that she stopped her wheel. "I cannot keep the dog," continued the boy, "and my heart is heavy."

"Your father is a curmudgeon," declared the old

woman, for the more she looked at Gabriel, the more she loved him. "What is it? Would he grudge food for your pet?"

"It is not that, but I cannot keep the dog in any case."

"Why not, pray?"

For answer Gabriel looked down into the topaz eyes whose regard had scarcely left his face during the interview. He held up his finger, and instantly the dog sat up.

"'T is a trick dog!" exclaimed Mother Lemon.

Gabriel began to whistle, and the dance commenced. The old woman pressed her side as she laughed at the comical, pretty sight of the little dancer, the fluffy golden threads of whose silky coat gleamed in the sunlight.

"Your fortune is made," said Mother Lemon as Gabriel ceased. "The dog will fetch a large price in the town, and because you are a good lad I will try to keep him for you until to-morrow, when you can go and sell him. If your father saw his tricks he would, himself, dispose of him and pocket the cash. I will shut him in an outhouse until you come again, and I only hope that he will not bark and vex Tommy!"

To the old woman's surprise Gabriel looked sad. "But you see, Mother Lemon," he said soberly, "the dog already belongs to somebody."

"La, la!" cried the old woman. "Why, then, could n't the somebody keep him?"

"That I do not know; but to-morrow I set forth with him to find his owner."

Mother Lemon nodded, and she saw the heaviness

of the boy's heart because he must part [illegible] len dog.

"'T is well that you leave him wit[illegible] for your father would not permit that, a[illegible] he would abate one farthing of my rent."

Gabriel went with her to the rich[illegible] ere Topaz was to spend the night, but the dog was loath to enter. He seemed to know that it meant parting with Gabriel. The boy stooped down and talked to him, but Topaz licked his face and sprang upon him beseechingly. When, finally, they closed the door with the dog within, the little fellow howled sorrowfully.

"I 'm sure he 's hungry, Mother Lemon," said the boy, and a lump seemed to stick in his throat. "One bone perhaps you could give him?"

"Alas, I have none, Gabriel. It is not often that Tommy and I sit down to meat. He is now hunting mice in the fields or he would be lashing his tail at these strange sounds!"

Gabriel opened the door and, going back into the shed, spoke sternly to Topaz, bidding him lie down. The dog obeyed, looking appealingly from the tops of his gem-like eyes, but when again the door was fastened, he kept an obedient silence.

Thanking Mother Lemon and promising to come early in the morning, Gabriel sped home. His own hunger made his heart ache for the little dog, and when he entered the cottage he was glad to see that his stepmother was preparing the evening meal, while his father bent, as usual, over a shabby, ink-stained desk, absorbed in his endless calculations.

Gabriel's elder brothers were there, too, talking and

laughing in an undertone. No one took any notice of Gabriel, whose eye fell on the dusty, rusty book, and eagerly he picked it up, thinking to see if again he could find the wonder of the flaming words.

As he opened it, several verses on the page before him gleamed into light. In mute wonder he read: —

"*And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.'*

"*But God said unto him, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?'*

"*So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.*"

Gabriel scarcely dared to lift his eyes toward his father, much less would he have offered to read to him again the flaming words.

All through the supper time he thought of them and kept very still, for the others were unusually talkative, his father seeming in such excellent spirits that Gabriel knew the figures on his desk had brought him satisfaction.

"But if he did not oppress Mother Lemon," thought the boy, "he would be richer toward God."

When the meal was over, Gabriel took a piece of paper and went quietly to the back of the house where, in a box, was the refuse of the day's cooking. He found some bones and other scraps, and, running across the fields to Mother Lemon's, tiptoed to the low shed which held Topaz, and, finding a wide crack, pushed the bones and scraps within.

Then he fled home and to bed, for he had always

found that the earlier he closed his eyes, the shorter was the night.

This time, however, when his sleepy lids opened, it was not to the light of day. A candle flame wavered above him and showed the face of his stepmother, bending down. "Gabriel, Gabriel," she whispered; then, as he would have replied, she hushed him with her finger on her lips. "I felt that I must warn you that your father is sorely vexed by the reproof you gave him to-day. He will send you out into the world, and I cannot prevent it; but in all that lies in my poor power, I will be your friend forever, Gabriel, for you are a good boy. Good-night, I must not stay longer," and a tear fell on the boy's cheek as she kissed him lightly, and then, with a breath, extinguished the candle and hastened noiselessly away.

Gabriel lay still, thinking busily for a while; but he was a fearless, innocent boy, and this threatened change in his fortunes could not keep him awake long. He soon fell asleep and slept soundly until the dawn.

Jumping out of bed then, he washed and dressed and went downstairs where his father awaited him.

"Gabriel," he said, "you do not grow brighter by remaining at home. I wish you to go out into the world and shift for yourself. When your fortune is made, you may return. As you go, however, I am willing to give you a small sum of money to use until you can obtain work."

"I will obey you, father," returned the boy, "but as a last favor, I ask that, in place of the money, you give me the cottage where Mother Lemon lives."

The man started and muttered: "He is even stupider

than I believed him." "You may have it," he added aloud, after a wondering pause.

"That — and this?" returned Gabriel questioningly, taking up the Book of Life.

His father scowled, for he remembered yesterday. "Very well, if you like," he answered, with a bad grace.

"Then thank you, father, and I will trouble you no more."

Gabriel's stepmother could scarcely repress her tears as she gave the boy his breakfast and prepared him a package of bread and meat to carry on his journey. Then she gave him a few pence, all she had, and he started off with her blessing.

As Gabriel went out into the fresh air, all nature was beautiful around him. There seemed no end to the blue sky, the wealth of sunshine, the generous foliage on the waving trees. The birds were singing joyously. All things breathed a blessing. Gabriel wondered, as he walked along, about the God who, some one had once told him, made all things. It seemed to him that it could be only a loving Being who created such beauty as surrounded him now.

The little book was clasped in his hand. He suddenly remembered with relief that he was alone and could read it without fear.

Eagerly opening it, one verse, as before, flamed into brightness, and Gabriel read: —

"*He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.*"

How wonderful! Gabriel's heart swelled. God was love, then. He closed the book. For the first time God

seemed real to him. The zephyrs that kissed his cheek and the sun that warmed him like a caress, seemed assuring him of the truth. The birds declared it in their songs.

Gabriel went down on his knees in the dewy grass and, dropping his bundle, clasped to his breast the book.

"Dear God," he said, "I am all alone and I have no one to love but Topaz. He is a little dog and I must give him up because he does n't belong to me. I know now that I shall love you and you will help me give Topaz back, because my stepmother told me that you know everything, and she always told the truth."

Then Gabriel arose and, taking the package of food, went on with a light heart until he came to Mother Lemon's cottage. Even that poor shanty looked pleasant in the morning beams. The tall sunflowers near the door flaunted their colors in the light, and their cheerful faces seemed laughing at Mother Lemon as she came to the entrance and called anxiously to the approaching boy: —

"Come quick, lad, hasten. My poor Tommy is distracted, for your dog whines and threatens to dig his way out of his prison, and I will not answer for the consequences."

Indeed, the tortoise-shell cat was seated on the old woman's shoulder. The fur stood stiffly on his arched back, his tail was the size of two, and his eyes glowed.

Gabriel just glanced at the cat as it opened its mouth and hissed, then he gazed at Mother Lemon.

"Did you know there was a God?" he asked earnestly.

"To be sure, lad," replied the old woman, surprised.

"I 've just learned about Him in this wonderful book; the Book of Life is its name. Saw you ever one like it?"

The boy placed the rusty little volume in her hands.

"Ay, lad, many times."

"Does every one know it?" he asked incredulously.

"Most people do."

"Then why is not every one happy?" asked Gabriel. "There is a God and He is love. Do people believe it?"

"Ah," returned the old woman dryly, "that is a different thing."

Gabriel scarcely heard her. He opened his precious book.

"There," he cried triumphantly, "see the living words: —

"'*Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*'"

"H'm," said the old woman. "The print is too fine for my old eyes."

"Yes, perhaps 't is for that that the letters flame like threads of fire. You see them?"

"Ahem!" returned Mother Lemon, for she saw no flaming letters, and she looked curiously at the boy's radiant face. Moreover, Tommy suddenly leaped from her shoulder to his. All signs of the cat's fear and anger had vanished, and as it rubbed its sleek fur against Gabriel's cheek, it purred so loudly that Mother Lemon marveled.

"Had my father studied this book he might have

been happy," continued the boy; "but he is offended with me and has sent me out into the world, and well I know that an unhappy heart drives him."

"Go back, boy, and make your peace with him," cried Mother Lemon excitedly, "or you will get nothing."

"Oh, I have received what I asked for. I asked to have this cottage, and he gave it to me, and I have come now to give it to you, Mother Lemon."

"My lad!" exclaimed the amazed woman, and her eyes swam with sudden tears.

"You will have no more rent to pay," said Gabriel, stroking the cat.

"And what is to become of you?" asked the woman, much moved.

"I cannot go home," replied the boy quietly; "and in any case I have to give Topaz, the dog, back to his owner. Why do you weep, Mother Lemon? Have n't I God to take care of me, and is n't He greater than all men?"

"Yes, lad. The Good Book says He is king of heaven and earth."

"Then if you believe it, why are you sad?"

Mother Lemon dried her eyes, and at this moment they heard a great scratching on the door of the shed; for Topaz had wakened from a nap and heard Gabriel's voice.

"Ah, that I had never given you the penny!" wailed the old woman, "for then you would not have bought the yellow dog and gone away where I shall see you no more."

Gabriel's sober face smiled. "Yes, you will see me

again, Mother Lemon, when my fortune is made. You have God, too, you know."

"Ay, boy. I'm nearer Him to-day than for many a long year. My blessing go with you wherever you are; and now let me have Tommy, that he does not fly at your dancer, to whom I say good riddance. Good-by, lad, good-by, and God bless you for your goodness and generosity to a lonely old creature!"

So saying, Mother Lemon took the cat in her arms, and, going into the house, fastened the door and pulled down the windows, while Gabriel went to the shed, and taking out the wooden staple released his prisoner.

Like a living nugget of gold the little dog leaped and capered about the boy, expressing his joy by the liveliest antics, barking meanwhile in a manner to set Tommy's nerves on edge; but Gabriel ran laughing before him into the forest, not stopping until they reached the brookside, where they both slaked their thirst. Then he put the Book of Life carefully into his blouse, and opening the package gave Topaz some of the bread and meat it contained.

All the time there was a pain in Gabriel's heart because Topaz, by the morning light, was gayer, prettier, more loving than ever, and his clear eyes looked so trustfully into Gabriel's that it was not easy to swallow the lump that rose in the boy's throat at the thought of parting with him.

At last the package of food was again tied, and Gabriel was ready to start. Topaz stood expectantly before him, his eyes gleaming softly, the color of golden sand as it lies beneath sunlit water.

The boy sat a moment watching the alert face which

said as plainly as words: "Whatever you are going to do, I am eager to do it, too."

Gabriel thoughtfully drew the silky ears through his hands. "God made you, too, Topaz, and He knows I love you. If it please Him, we shall not find your master this first day."

Then he jumped up and searched for a good stick. He tried the temper of a couple by whipping the air, and when he found one stiff enough, ran it through the string about the bundle and looked around for Topaz. To his astonishment the dog had disappeared. He whistled, but there was no sign.

Gabriel's face grew blank, then flushed as the reason of the dog's flight flashed upon him. It forced tears into his eyes to think that any one could have struck the pretty creature, and that Topaz could have suffered enough to distrust even him.

He threw down stick and bundle and walked around anxiously, whistling from time to time. At last his quick eyes caught the gleam of golden color behind a bush. Even Topaz's fright could not take him far while a doubt remained; but he was crouching to the ground, and his eyes were appealing. Gabriel threw himself down beside the little fellow, and for a minute his wet eyes were pressed to the silky fur, while he stroked his playmate. Topaz licked his face, and the dog's fear fled forever. He followed Gabriel back to the place where the bundle was dropped, and the boy patted him while he took up the stick and set it across his shoulder.

Topaz's ears flapped with joy as they started on their tramp.

Gabriel put away all thought of the future and frolicked with his playmate as they went along, throwing a stick which Topaz would bring, and beg with short, sharp barks that the boy would throw once more, when he would race after it like a streak of sunshine, his golden curls flying.

From time to time Gabriel ran races with him, and no boy at school could beat Gabriel at running, so Topaz had a lively morning.

By the time the sun was high in the heavens they were both hungry and glad to rest. They found the shade of a large tree, and there Gabriel opened his package again, and when he tied it up it made a very small bundle on the end of the stick he carried over his shoulder.

There was not so much running this afternoon. Gabriel and Topaz had come a long way, and toward evening they began to see the roofs of the town ahead of them.

The dog no longer raced to right and left after butterfly and bird, but trotted sedately at the boy's heel, and after a time Gabriel picked him up and carried him, for the thought came that perhaps Topaz could earn them a place to sleep, and Gabriel wished to rest the little legs that could be so nimble.

It was nearly dusk when they reached a cultivated field and then a farmhouse. Some children were playing in the yard, and when they saw a dusty boy turn in at the gate, they ran to the house crying that a beggar was coming.

Their mother came out from the door, and the expression of her face told plainly that she meant to drive the dusty couple away.

Gabriel set down the dog and took off his hat, and his clear eyes looked out of his grimy face.

"I am not a beggar," he said simply. "I go to the town to return this dog to its master, but night is coming on, and we should like to sleep on the hay."

"How do I know you are not a thief?" returned the woman. "It is not a very likely story that you are tramping way to town to give back a yellow dog."

"He is a dog of high degree," declared Gabriel, "and if you will let us sleep in your barn he will dance for you."

Upon this the children begged in chorus to see the dog dance, and the mother consented; so Topaz, when he was bade, sat up, and then, as Gabriel whistled, the dainty, dusty little white feet began to pirouette, and the children clapped their hands for joy and would have kept the dancer at his work until dark, but that Gabriel would not have it so.

"We have come far," he said. "Let us rest now, and in the morning Topaz will dance for you again."

So all consented and escorted the strangers to the barn, where there was a clean, sweet hay-loft.

The little dog remembered the night before, and whined under his breath and wagged his tail as he looked at Gabriel, as if begging the boy not to leave him.

Gabriel understood, and patted the silky coat. It took him some minutes to get rid of the children, who wished to continue to caress and play with Topaz; but at last they were gone and the two weary wanderers could lie down on the sweet hay. As Topaz nestled into his arms Gabriel felt very thankful to God for

their long happy day. If the master should come to-morrow — well, the only thing to do was to give up his playfellow, and he should still be grateful for the day and night they had spent together.

Bright sunlight was streaming through the chinks of the rafters when the travelers awoke. Sounds of men and horses leaving the barn died away, and then Gabriel arose and shook himself. Topaz jumped about in delight that another day had commenced. The boy looked at him wistfully. Was this to be their last morning together?

He felt the little book in his blouse and taking it out, opened it. It was dark in the barn, but, as ever, this wonderful book had a light of its own, and in tiny letters of flame there appeared this verse: —

"*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*"

Much comforted, Gabriel put the dear book back in its hiding-place, and taking his small bundle, left the barn, the dog bounding after him.

No sooner had the children of the house seen them coming than they ran forth to meet them, singing and whistling and crying upon Topaz to dance, but the dog kept his golden eyes upon his master and noticed no one beside.

The mother came to the door with a much pleasanter face than she had worn yesterday.

"You may go to the pump yonder and wash yourself," she said; and Gabriel obeyed gladly, wiping his face upon the grass that grew long and rank about the well.

The clean face was such a good one that when the

woman saw it she hushed the children. "Be still until they have had some breakfast," she said, "then the dog will dance again."

So Gabriel and Topaz had a comfortable meal which they enjoyed, and afterward the boy whistled and the dog danced with a good heart, and the children danced too, for very pleasure. They were all so happy that Gabriel for the moment forgot his errand.

"If you will sell your dog I will buy him," said the woman, at last, for the children had given her no peace when they lay down nor when they rose up, until she had promised to make this offer.

Gabriel looked at her frankly, and a shadow fell over his bright face. "Alas, madam, he is not mine to sell."

"Where dwells his master, then?"

"That I know not, for he had strayed and I found him and must restore him if I can."

"'T is a fool's errand," said the woman, who liked the dog herself, and, moreover, saw that there was money in his nimble feet. "I will give you as many coppers as you can carry in your cap if you will leave him here and go your way and say nothing about it to any one."

Gabriel shook his head. "Alas, madam, he is not mine," was all the woman could induce him to say, and she thought his sadness was at the thought of the cap full of pence which she believed he dared not accept for fear of getting into trouble. Little she knew that if only the golden dog were Gabriel's very own, no money could buy from the boy the one heart on earth that beat warmly for him, and the graceful, gay coat

of flossy silk which he loved to caress; so the farmer's wife and children were obliged to let the couple go.

Gabriel had seen, the night before, a creek that wandered through the meadow, and before entering the town he ran to it and, pulling off his clothes, jumped in and took a good swim. Barking with delight, Topaz joined in this new frolic, splashing and swimming about like the jolly little water dog that he was.

When, at last, they came out and were dried, and Gabriel was dressed, they were a fresh looking pair that started out for the town.

Now Gabriel was not so stupid as his brothers believed, and, as he said over to himself the verse he had read that morning in the barn, and looked at Topaz, so winsomely shining after his bath, he began to see how unwise it would be to tell every one he met that he was searching for Topaz's owner. There were people in the world, he knew, who would not scruple to pretend that such a pretty creature was their own, even if they had never seen him before; so Gabriel determined to be very careful and to know that God would give him power and a sound mind, if he would not be afraid, as the Book of Life had said.

Now the two entered the town; but from the moment their feet struck the pavements, Topaz's manner changed. He kept so close to Gabriel that the boy often came near to stepping on him.

"What ails you, little one?" asked Gabriel, perplexed by his companion's strange actions. "Don't you know that you are going home?"

But Topaz did not bark a reply. His feathery tail hung down. He looked at Gabriel only from the tops

of his eyes as he clung close to his heels, and he even seemed to the boy to tremble when they crossed the busy streets.

"You must n't be afraid, Topaz," said Gabriel stoutly. "No one likes a coward."

But Topaz only clung the closer, sometimes looking from left to right, fearfully. At last his actions were so strange that Gabriel took him up under his arm. "Perhaps if we meet his owner he can see him the better so," thought the boy, and he looked questioningly into the faces of men, women, and children as they passed him by. No one did more than stare at him after observing the beautiful head that looked out from under his arm.

One good-natured man smiled in passing and said to Gabriel: "Going to the palace, I suppose."

This remark astonished the boy very much, and he looked around after the man.

Now there had been some one following Gabriel for the last five minutes, and when he looked around, this person, who was an organ-grinder, quickly turned his back and began grinding out a tune. At the first sound of it Topaz started and trembled violently and snuggled so close to Gabriel that the latter, who did not connect his action with the music, was dismayed.

"Topaz, what *is* the matter?" he asked, and hurried along, thinking to find some park where he could sit down and try to discover what ailed his little playfellow.

As he began to hurry, the organ-grinder's black eyes snapped, and he stopped playing and beckoned to a big officer of the law who stood near.

"My dog has been stolen," he exclaimed. "Come with me, after the thief. I will pay you."

The big man obeyed and walked along, grumbling: "Is the city full of stolen dogs, I wonder?" he muttered.

"It is my dancing dog!" explained the organ-grinder. "The boy yonder is carrying him in his arms and running away. He will deny it, but I will pay you a silver coin. It is a week since I lost him."

"Stop, thief," roared the officer, beginning to run. The organ-grinder ran as well as he could with his heavy burden, and there began to be an excitement on the street, so that Gabriel, hugging his dog, stopped to see what was the matter.

What was his surprise to be confronted by the big officer and the black-eyed Italian.

"Drop that dog!" ordered the officer gruffly.

"Not till I get a string around his neck," objected the organ-grinder, and produced a cord which he knotted about Topaz's fluffy throat. Then he pulled the dog away roughly.

"Is he yours?" cried Gabriel, eyes and mouth open in astonishment. "No, it cannot be. He is afraid of you. Oh, see!"

"Ho, this boy has stolen my whole living," said the organ-grinder, "and now he tries to claim my property."

"Do not believe him!" cried Gabriel, appealing to the big officer. "It cannot be his. The dog loves me. Let me show you."

"Stand off, stand off," ordered the organ-grinder, for a crowd had gathered. "Would the dog dance for me if he were not mine? See!" He drew from his coat a little whip and struck the organ with a snap, at which Topaz jumped. Then he dropped the dog and

began to grind, and the crowd saw the trembling animal raise itself to its hind legs and begin to dance. Oh, the mincing little uncertain steps! No tossing of the yellow curls was here.

Gabriel's heart bounded hotly. Did these people think they were seeing Topaz dance?

"Oh, believe me, let me show you!" he cried, trying to come near; but the big officer pushed him away roughly.

"Can you pay your debts?" he said, coming close to the organ-grinder. The man stopped turning his crank and taking a silver coin handed it to the officer, but slyly, so that no one saw. Then the big man turned to Gabriel. "Now be off from here!" he said sternly. "If you hang about a minute longer, into the lock-up you go!"

Gabriel, white and sorry, clasped his hands helplessly, and watched while the organ-grinder caught Topaz up under his arm and made off with him, down a side street.

The boy felt that he must pursue them. He turned his tearful gaze on the big officer. "I found that dog, sir," he said.

"The more fool you, then, not to take it to the palace," returned the other. "It is gaudy enough to have perhaps pleased the princess, and the organ-grinder would have had to get another slave."

So saying, the officer laughed and carelessly turned away.

Gabriel stood still, choking. It must be that the princess wished to buy a pet. Ah, if he might even have parted with his little friend to her, how far better it

would have been than this strange, wrong thing that had happened with such suddenness that the boy could scarcely get his breath for the way his heart beat.

He pressed his hand to his streaming eyes, then, seeing that people were staring at him curiously, he stole away, walking blindly and stumbling over the rough pavement.

At last he came to a place in a quiet street where a seat was built into a wall, and there he sat down and tried to think. In his despair the thought of the great King of heaven and earth came to him.

"Dear God," he murmured breathlessly, "what now? What did I wrong, that you did not take care of Topaz and me?"

The breeze in the treetops was his only answer; so after listening for a minute to the soothing sound, he took the Book of Life from his blouse and opened it.

Oh, wonderful were the words he saw. How they glowed and seemed to live upon the gray page.

"*Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them; for the Lord thy God, He it is that doth go with thee: He will not fail thee nor forsake thee.*"

Gabriel caught his trembling lip between his teeth. He knew no one in this crowded city. He had no home, no friends, no money except the few coppers in his pocket. How, then, was help to come?

"Dear God," he whispered, "I have no one now in all the world but you. Topaz is gone and I am grieved sore, for he is wretched. Let me save him. I am not afraid, dear God, not afraid of anything. I trust you."

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Comforted by a little blind hope that crept into his heart, the boy looked up; and the first thing that his swollen eyes rested upon was a large poster affixed to the opposite wall, with letters a foot high. "REWARD!" it said. "H. R. H. the princess has lost her golden dog. A full reward for his return to the palace!"

Gabriel's heart gave a great bound. What golden dog was there anywhere but Topaz? The color that had fled from his cheeks came back. But would an organ-grinder dare claim for his own a dog that belonged to a princess of the country? And yet — and yet — the little dog's joy and light-heartedness with himself showed that he had been well treated by whomever taught him his pretty tricks. The organ-grinder did not treat him well, and who that really knew Topaz would dream of taking a whip to force him to his work!

Gabriel, young as he was, saw that there was some mystery here, and beside, there had been the glowing words in the Book of Life, telling him again not to be afraid, and promising him that the greatest of all kings would not fail him or forsake him.

He started up from the seat, but forced himself back and opened the small bundle of dry bread and meat; for there was no knowing when he should eat again. He took all that remained, and when he had swallowed the last crumbs, arose with a determined heart and hurried up the street.

He asked the first man he met if he could direct him to the palace.

The man shrugged his shoulders. "Where is your yellow dog?" he asked.

"I have none," returned Gabriel, "but I have business at the palace."

The man laughed down at the shabby figure of the country lad. "And don't know where it is? Well, follow your nose. You are on the right road."

Gabriel sped along and he was indeed much nearer than he had supposed; for very soon he met a sorry-faced man with a yellow dog in his arm; then another; then another; and in fact he could trace his way to the palace by the procession of men, women, and children, all returning, and each one carrying a yellow dog and chattering or grumbling according to the height from which his hopes had been dashed.

When Gabriel reached the palace gates he saw that there were plenty more applicants waiting inside the grounds. The boy had never realized how many varying sizes and shades of yellow dogs there were in the world.

The guard had received orders to deny entrance to no person who presented a gold-colored dog for examination, but Gabriel was empty-handed and the guard frowned upon him.

"I wish to see the princess," said the boy.

"I dare say," replied the guard. "Be off."

"But I wish to tell her about a golden dog."

"Can't you see that we are half buried in golden dogs?" returned the guard crossly.

"No, sir. I have seen none but yellow dogs since I drew near this place. I have a tale to tell the princess."

The guard could not forbear laughing at this simplicity. "Do you suppose ragamuffins like you approach her highness?" he returned. "A dog's tail is the only sort she is interested in to-day. See the cham-

berlain yonder. He is red with fatigue. He is choosing such of the lot as are worthy to be looked at by the princess, and should he see you demanding audience and with no dog to show, it will go hard with you. Be off!" and the guard's gesture was one to be obeyed.

Gabriel withdrew quietly; but he was not daunted. The princess would, perhaps, grow weary and drive out. At any rate there was nothing to do except watch for her. He looked at the splendid palace and gardens and wondered if Topaz had ever raced about there. Then he wondered what the dog was doing now; but this thought must be put away, because it made Gabriel's eyes misty, and he must watch, watch.

At last his patient vigil was rewarded. A splendid coach drawn by milk-white horses appeared in the palace grounds.

Gabriel's heart beat fast. He knew he must act quickly and before any one could catch him; so he made his way cautiously to the shelter of a large, flowering shrub by the roadside.

The coach approached and the iron gates were flung wide. Gabriel plainly saw a young girl with troubled eyes sitting alone within, and on the seat opposite an older woman with her back to the horses.

Suddenly, while the carriage still moved slowly outside the gates that clanged behind it, Gabriel started from his hiding-place and swiftly leaped to the step of the coach and looked straight into the young girl's eyes.

"Princess," he exclaimed breathlessly, "I know of a golden dog, and they will not let me" — but by this time the lady-in-waiting was screaming, and the guard,

who recognized Gabriel, rushed forth from the gate and, seizing him roughly, jerked the boy from the step.

"Unhand him instantly!" exclaimed the princess, her eyes flashing, for the look Gabriel had given her had reached her heart. "Stop the horses!"

Instantly the coach came to a standstill.

"*I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee,*" sounded in Gabriel's ears amid the roaring in his head, as he found himself free. He did not wait for further invitation, but jumped back to the coach.

"Stop screaming, Lady Gertrude!" exclaimed the princess.

"But the beggar's hands are on the satin, your highness!" exclaimed the lady-in-waiting, who had had a hard week and wished there was not a yellow dog in the world.

"Princess, hear me and you will be glad," declared Gabriel. "I beg for nothing but to be heard. I believe I know where your dog is and that he suffers."

No one could have seen and heard Gabriel as he said this, without believing him. Tears of excitement sprang to his gray eyes and a pang went through the heart of the princess. How many times she had wondered if her lost pet had found such love as she gave him!

She at once ordered the door of the coach to be opened and that Gabriel should enter.

"Your highness!" exclaimed Lady Gertrude, nearly fainting.

"You may leave us if you please," said the princess, with a little smile; but Lady Gertrude held her smelling-salts to her nose and remained in the coach, which

the princess ordered to be driven through a secluded wood-road.

Gabriel, sitting beside her on the fine satin cushion, told his story, from the moment when he found the dingy, brown dog in the hands of the teasing boys, to the moment when the organ-grinder bore him away.

The hands of the princess were clasped tightly as she listened. "You called him Topaz," she said, when the boy had finished. "I called him Goldilocks. Ah, if it should be the same! If it should!"

"Surely there are not two dogs in the world so beautiful," said Gabriel.

"That is what I say to myself," responded the princess.

"Had he been less wonderful, your highness, he would be safe now, for I should have kept him. He loved me," said Gabriel simply.

"You are an honest boy," replied the princess gratefully, "and I will make you glad of it whether Topaz turns out to be Goldilocks or not. But you say he danced with so much grace?"

"Yes, your highness, and tossed his head for glee till his curls waved merrily."

"'T is the same!" cried the princess, in a transport. "His eyes *are* like topazes. Your name is the best. He shall have it. Ah, he has slept in a shed and eaten cold scraps! My Goldilocks!"

"Yes, your highness, and would be glad to do so still; for he fears his dark-browed master, and dances with such trembling you would not know him again."

"Ah, cruel boy, cease! Take me to him at once. Show my men the spot where you left him."

"Your highness must use great care, for if once the organ-grinder suspects that you are searching for him, no one will ever again see the golden dog; for the man will fear to be found with him."

"You are right. I can send out men with orders to examine every hand-organ in the city."

"If they were quiet enough it might be done, but I have a better plan."

"You may speak," returned the princess.

"When we are alone, your highness," said Gabriel; and the lady-in-waiting was so amazed at such effrontery that she forgot to use her salts.

"To the palace," ordered the princess.

Lady Gertrude gave the order.

"Does your highness intend to take this — this person to the palace?" she inquired.

"I do. He loves my dog, and therefore I would give more for his advice at this time than for that of the Lord High Chamberlain."

"Then I have nothing more to say," returned the Lady Gertrude, leaning back among the cushions; and this was cheering news to her companions.

What was the astonishment of the guard to see the coach return, still carrying the rustic lad, who sat so composedly beside the princess, and dismounted with her at the palace steps.

Once within, nothing was too fine for Gabriel. A gentleman-in-waiting was set to serve him in an apartment, which made the boy pinch himself to make sure he was not dreaming.

When he had taken a perfumed bath and obediently put on the fine clothing that was provided for him, he

was summoned to a splendid room where the princess awaited him, surrounded by her ladies. She was scarcely more than a child, herself, and the boy wondered how she liked to have so many critical personages about, to watch her every action.

As he entered the room, every eye was turned upon him, and the Lady Gertrude, especially, put up her glass in wonder that this handsome lad with the serious, fearless eyes, who seemed so at ease in the silks and satins he now wore, could be the peasant who had jumped on the step of the coach.

The princess looked upon him with favor and smiled. "We are ready now," she said, "to hear what plan you propose for the rescue of the golden dog."

"Then will your highness kindly ask these ladies to leave us?" returned Gabriel.

"Ah, to be sure. I forgot your wish that the communication should be private."

Then the princess gave orders that every one should leave the room, and her companions obeyed reluctantly, the Lady Gertrude above all. She remained close to the outside of the closed door, ready to fly within at the slightest cry from her mistress; for the Lady Gertrude could not quite believe that a boy who had ever worn a calico shirt was a safe person to leave alone with royalty.

For a few minutes there was only a low buzz of voices behind the closed door, then a merry laugh from the princess assailed Lady Gertrude's ears. It was the first time she had laughed since the disappearance of the golden dog.

Before Gabriel slipped between the sheets that night

in his luxurious chamber, he took the little brown book which had been folded away with his shabby clothing. His heart glowed with gratitude to God for the help he had received that day, and when he opened the page it was as if a loving voice spoke: —

"*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee.*"

"Dear God, I trust in thee!" he murmured; then he climbed into the soft bed and slept dreamlessly.

The following morning, the king and queen having given consent to their daughter's request, two children drove out of the palace grounds in a plain black carriage. The coachman drove to a confectioner's near the centre of the town, where the horses stopped. A tall man in dark clothes, who was also in the carriage, stepped down first and handed out the girl, and afterward the boy jumped down. Then the carriage rolled away.

"Remember," said the girl, turning to the tall man, "you are not to remain too near us."

He bowed submissively, and in a minute more the girl and boy, plainly dressed, middle-class people, were looking in at the confectioner's window at a pink and white frosted castle that reared itself above a cake surrounded with bon-bons to make one's mouth water.

"Saw you ever anything so grand, your highness?" exclaimed Gabriel, in awe.

The princess laughed. Her cheeks were pink and her eyes sparkled. This was the first time her little feet had ever touched a city street, and she loved the adventure.

"Find me Topaz, and all the contents of this window shall be yours," she returned.

"I shall not care to have anything until we do find him, your highness," replied Gabriel simply.

"You must not call me that. Some one might hear you."

"I know it. There is danger of it," declared Gabriel; "but the gentleman who is to follow us said I should lose my head if I treated you familiarly."

The princess laughed again. She was in a new world, like a bird whose cage door had been opened.

"We need your head until we find Topaz," she replied, "for you have clever ideas. Nevertheless, my name is Louise, and you may remember it if necessity arises. Now where shall we go first?"

"Straight down this street," said the boy, leading the way. "I am expecting God will show us where to go," he added.

His companion looked at him in surprise, and Gabriel observed it. "Don't you know about God?" he asked.

"Of course. Who does not?" she returned briefly.

"I did not," answered Gabriel, "until I found the Book of Life. It speaks to me in words of flame. Have you such a book?"

"No. I will buy it from you," said the princess.

"No one can do that," declared the boy, "for it is more precious than all beside. This morning I looked into it for guidance through the day, and the glowing words were sweet: —

"'*For He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways.*'"

Gabriel smiled at the princess with such gladness that she gazed at him curiously.

"You cannot refuse to sell me your book," she said at last, "for I can have your head taken off if I wish. I am the king's daughter."

"God is greater than all kings," returned Gabriel, "and He would not allow it. He helped me to get your attention yesterday, and to-day He is sending his angels with us to find Topaz. The Book of Life is for every one, I believe. I am sure you can have one, too."

Here both the boy and girl started, for there came a metallic sound of music on the air. "Be cautious, be very cautious," warned Gabriel, and as the princess started to run, he caught her by the arm, a proceeding which horrified the tall man in dark clothes who was at some distance back, but had never taken his eyes from them. "You must not be too interested," added the boy, as excited as she. "A hand-organ is an every-day affair. We even hear them in the country at times."

But they both followed the sound, veiling their eagerness as best they might. When they came in sight of the organ-grinder they both sighed, for he had no assistance from a little dog nor from any one else.

The princess was for turning away impatiently.

"Wait," said Gabriel, "we are interested in organ music." So he persuaded her to stand a minute, while her bright eyes roved in all directions; and the organ man saw a hope of coppers in the pair, for they were decently dressed and lingered in apparent pleasure. He kept his eyes upon them and at last held out his cap.

The princess had plenty of pence in the bag at her

side, placed there by the thoughtful Gabriel in place of the handful of silver with which she had intended to reward street musicians.

"You are one of the common people, your highness; or else you need have no hope of Topaz," he had reminded her; so now the impatient girl tossed some coppers into the outstretched cap and hurried along as if they were wasting time.

The next organ they found had, sitting upon it, a monkey dressed in red cap and jacket, and Gabriel insisted on waiting to watch him, although the sight of his antics only swelled the princess's heart as she thought that somewhere Topaz was being forced to such indignity.

The little monkey did not seem to object, and gladly ran to his master with the coppers that Gabriel dropped in his cap.

The next organ-grinder they found had with him a little Italian girl with a red silk handkerchief knotted about her head. She sang and played on a tambourine, and Gabriel persuaded his companion to watch and listen for a few minutes.

If only they could find Topaz first, her royal highness, princess of the country, would ask nothing better than to roam freely about the streets, listening and gazing like any other young girl out for a holiday; but Topaz was on her mind, and she was not accustomed to being forced to wait.

"Listen to me," murmured Gabriel, as they moved on after making the little Italian show her white teeth in pleasure at their gift. "Do not frown. You must look pleased. It is the only way."

So the princess put a restraint upon herself. With the next organ they met, she saw a yellow dog who wore a cap fastened under his chin, and sat up holding a cup in his teeth for pennies, and she set her lips in the effort to control herself. The dog had long ears and white paws. Gabriel's own heart beat in his throat, but he grasped the woolen stuff of his companion's gown as the man began to play. It was not the man of yesterday, but that mattered not to Gabriel. They waited till the tune was finished, the gaze of the princess devouring the dog meanwhile. Then the little creature trotted up to them very prettily on his hind legs, offering his cup, and the children dropped into it coppers while they looked into the yellow eyes.

"Hi — Oh — Hi — Oh" — and another tune broke into the one which their organ-grinder commenced. Following the sound of the call, Gabriel and the princess looked a little way off, across the street, and beheld a street musician grinding away and beckoning to them with his head, while his teeth gleamed in an attractive smile.

"Pay no attention to him," said the man with the yellow dog, grinding lustily, and making a frightful discord. "'T is Pedro and his little brown beast. He seeks to draw my listeners away as if I had not the most intelligent dog in the universe, and, moreover, of the color which the princess has made fashionable. I doubt not if her highness saw my dog she would give me for him as many gold eagles as I have fingers on my hand; but he is not for the princess, who has joys enough without depriving the children on the street of their pleasures."

The girl in the brown woolen gown was clasping her hands painfully together, and her heart was beating with hope; but Gabriel shook his head at her, and she remained quiet. He had already seen that the dog was not Topaz, although astonishingly like him in size and shape.

Pedro, across the street, kept drawing nearer, as he played and smiled and beckoned with his head. There trotted after him an unpromising little brown dog with limp tail and ears. The man, in his good-nature and success, looked very different from the organ-grinder of yesterday; and as he laughed aloud, the master of the yellow dog frowned and shouted something in Italian back at him, before shouldering his organ and tramping away, his dog very glad to go on all fours again.

Pedro pulled off his hat, smiling at the lingering girl and boy. "He says you have given him all your coppers," he said. "I don't believe it; but in any case I will give you a tune."

"You are letting him go," murmured the princess breathlessly, starting to run after the yellow dog.

"Saw you not 't was not Topaz?" asked Gabriel, under cover of the lively tune, and again seizing a fold of the woolen gown, he held the girl in her place. "Wait," he said aloud, with a show of interest, "I wish to hear the music."

"Let me go, my heart is sick," returned the princess, turning her head away.

Gabriel pretended to frown at her and pulled some pence from his pocket, at sight of which the organ-grinder's eyes brightened and he played harder than ever.

"Can you be strong, princess?" asked the boy distinctly. "Don't look now, but Topaz has come to us."

The princess started, and instead of obeying, looked closely first at the dejected little brown dog and then up and down the street and behind her, but in vain.

"If those pence are for me, my boy," said the organ-grinder, stopping his music, "you and your sister shall see my dog dance. He is the wonder of the world, although he is not much to look at. We cannot all be royal and own golden dogs."

Gabriel threw him the pennies, for he did not yet wish to come too near Topaz, lest the little dog might see deeper than the respectable raiment in which his own brother would not have known him.

The boy clapped his hands above his head; the organ-grinder thought it was for joy, but it was a signal agreed upon. A shrill whistle sounded on the air. The organ-grinder knew the sound and knew that it was intended to summon the officers of the law. He wondered what poor wretch was getting into trouble; but it was none of his business. He took a whip from within his coat, and with it struck the organ a violent snap.

At the sound the little dog jumped. The princess noticed that Gabriel's eyes were fixed on him, and wondered what he could be thinking of to confound this sorry-looking, dull-colored animal with her gay companion of the palace garden.

The music began, the dog reared himself patiently upon his hind feet and stepped about so slowly that the organ-man growled at him and struck the organ again. Then the dancer moved faster; but the ears did

not fly and every motion was a jerk. Nevertheless, the princess's heart had now begun to suffocate her. She recalled Gabriel's story of washing off the brown color from the dingy fur in the brook, and her eyes swam with tears at the mere possibility that this might be the object of her search. She had just sense enough to keep still and leave everything to Gabriel. Here, too, approached the tall gentleman, followed by an officer of the law. Gabriel saw at a glance that it was the same big fellow who had driven him away yesterday.

The tall, dignified gentleman-in-waiting looked in disgust at the stiff little brown dancer.

"This foolish peasant is but getting us into trouble," he thought, "but he will suffer for it."

Indeed, Gabriel knew the law of the land; knew that if he accused the organ-grinder wrongfully he would be walked off to prison in his place; but Gabriel had seen the brown dog's eyes. There were no doubts in his heart, which bounded so that it seemed as if it could hardly stay within his bosom.

"Come away, your highness," murmured the gentleman-in-waiting, in the princess's ear. "This is a farce."

"Stand back and wait," she replied sternly, and he obeyed.

Meanwhile the organ-grinder had observed the newcomers and was showing every tooth in his head at the prospect of a rich harvest of coppers. In a minute he ceased playing. The brown dog dropped to all fours and his hopeless air sent a pang through the princess.

The organ-grinder held out his cap.

"I don't think much of your dog's dancing," said

Gabriel, looking him in the eye. "I could make him do better, myself."

"It does n't do to use the whip too much," replied the organ-grinder, but Gabriel had already gone on his knees beside the dog and whispered to him. Instantly the little creature went into a transport of delight. Bounding to the boy's breast, it clung there so closely that Gabriel gave up the experiment that he had intended of trying to show the organ-man how his slave could dance.

Rising, Gabriel held the panting Topaz in his arms. "I declare," he said aloud, "I declare this to be the princess's lost dog."

The organ-grinder scowled and grew pale. "'T is a lie," he cried, "hers was a golden dog."

"This is a golden dog," said Gabriel.

Even the gentleman-in-waiting was impressed by the certainty of the boy's voice. The organ-grinder turned to the officer and shook his fist. "'T is that boy again!" he cried. "If this is the princess's dog, that boy stole him. As for me, I found the poor creature, friendless and lost, and I took pity on him."

"Why, then, did you stain his coat?" asked Gabriel.

The organ-grinder looked wildly up and down the street. For some reason he felt that a silver coin would not affect the officer of the law to-day.

The gentleman-in-waiting pointed sternly at the culprit. "Take him away," he said to the officer. "Should this prove to be indeed the princess's dog, he has committed treason."

And now the black carriage and spirited horses drove

up. The three entered it with the dog and were whirled away.

By noon it was rumored in that street that her royal highness, the princess of the land, had walked through it, dressed like one of the common people.

Within the carriage the princess was weeping tears of joy above her pet.

"If it is you, Goldilocks, if it is you!" she kept repeating; but the dog clung to the one who had recognized his topaz eyes in spite of everything.

"He is not fit, yet, for your highness to touch," said Gabriel, "but if you will give me one hour, I will show him to you unchanged."

That afternoon there was rejoicing at the palace. All had felt the influence of the princess's grief, for she was the idol of the king and queen; and now, as Topaz capered again, a living sunbeam, through corridor and garden, all had a word of praise for the peasant boy who had restored him to his home.

At evening the princess received a message from Gabriel and ordered that he be sent to her.

In a minute he entered, dressed in the shabby garments in which he had leaped upon the coach step. In his hand he held a little rusty book, and his clear eyes looked steadily at the princess, with the honest light which had first made her listen to him.

"I come to say farewell, your highness," he said.

A line showed in her forehead. "What reward have they given you?"

"None, your highness."

"What have you in your hand?"

"The Book of Life."

"Come nearer and let me see it."

The ladies-in-waiting were, as usual, grouped near their mistress, and they stared curiously at the peasant boy.

Only Topaz, who at his entrance had bounded from a satin cushion as golden as his flossy coat, leaped upon him with every sign of affection.

Gabriel approached and handed the book to the princess.

She opened it and ran her eye over the gray pages. "I see no fiery letters," she said, and handed it back. The boy opened it. As usual a flaming verse arrested his eye. He pointed with his finger at the words and read aloud: —

"'*He shall call upon me and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble: I will deliver him and honor him.*'"

"'T is a fair promise," said the princess, "but I see no flaming letters."

"I do, your highness," returned Gabriel simply, and looking into his eyes she knew that he spoke the truth.

She gazed at him curiously. "Where go you now, and what do you do?" she asked, after a pause.

"That I know not," replied Gabriel, "but God will show me."

"By means of that book?"

"Yes, your highness," and Gabriel bowed his head and moved toward the door. Topaz followed close at his heel. If Gabriel were going for a walk, why, so much the better. He was going, too.

The boy smiled rather sadly, for he knew the golden dog loved him, and there was no one else anywhere who

cared whether he went or came. He stooped and, picking up the little creature, carried him to the princess. "You will have to hold him from following me, your highness."

The girl took the dog, but he struggled and broke from her grasp, to leap once again upon his departing friend.

"Wait," said the princess, and rose. Gabriel stood, all attention, and gazed at her, where she stood, smiling kindly upon him. "I promised a full reward to whomever returned me my dog. You have not yet received even the window-full of pink and white sweetmeats which I promised you this morning."

Gabriel smiled, too.

"Where is your home, Gabriel, and why are you not returning there?"

"I have no home. It is a long story, your highness, and would not interest you."

"Ah, but it does interest me," and the princess smiled more brightly than ever; "because if you have no home you can remain in our service."

A light flashed into Gabriel's sober face. "What happiness!" he exclaimed.

No answer could have pleased the princess better than the pleasure in his eyes. "Topaz is not willing you should leave him, and neither am I. When you are older, his majesty, my father, will look after your fortunes. For the present you shall be a page."

"Your highness!" protested the Lady Gertrude, "have you considered? The pages are of lofty birth. Will it not go hard with the peasant? Give him a purse and let him go."

The princess answered but did not remove her gaze from the boy's flushed face, while Topaz's cold little nose nestled in his down-dropped hand.

"Gabriel is my friend, be he prince or peasant," she said slowly, "and it will go hard with those who love him not." The young girl's eyes met Gabriel's and then she smiled as light-heartedly as on this morning when she wore the woolen gown. "And now make Topaz dance," she added, "the way he danced in the woods."

The boy's happy glance dropped to the dog, and he raised his finger. With alacrity Topaz sat up, and then Gabriel began to whistle.

How the court ladies murmured with soft laughter, for no one had ever seen such a pretty sight. Not for any of them, not for the princess herself, had Topaz danced as he danced to-day.

"Ah," murmured the princess, "how much more powerful than the whip is love!"

When music and dancing had ceased, she smiled once more upon Gabriel, whose happy heart was full.

"Go now," she said, "and learn of your new duties; but the chief one you have learned already. It is to be faithful!"

CHAPTER XII

THE TALKING DOLL

Mr. Evringham's horseback rides in these days were apt to be accompanied by the stories, which Jewel related to him with much enthusiasm while they cantered through wood-roads, and it is safe to say that the tales furnished full as much entertainment at second hand as they had at first.

The golden dog had deeply impressed Jewel's fancy, and when she finished relating the story, her face all alight, Mr. Evringham shook his head.

"Star is going to have his hands full, I can see," he remarked, restraining Essex Maid's longing for a gallop.

"Why, grandpa?"

"To hold his own against that dog."

Jewel looked thoughtful. "I suppose it would n't be any use to try to teach Star to dance, would it?" she asked.

"Oh, yes. Ponies learn to dance. We shall have to go to a circus and let you see one; but how should you like it every time Star heard a band or a hand-organ to have him get up on his hind legs and begin?"

Jewel laughed and patted her pony's glossy neck. "I guess I like Star best the way he is," she replied, "but grandpa, did you ever *hear* of such a darling dog?"

"I confess I never did," admitted the broker.

"I should think there was some trick Star could learn," said Jewel musingly.

"Why, of course there is. Tell Zeke you wish to teach Star to shake hands. He 'll help you."

This idea pleased Jewel very much, and in the fullness of time the feat was accomplished; but by the time the black pony had learned that he must lift his little hoof carefully and put it in his mistress's hand, before his lump of sugar was forthcoming, he wished, like the Lady Gertrude, that there had never been a yellow dog in the world.

When next Mrs. Evringham, Jewel, and Anna Belle settled in the ravine to the reading of a story, it was Jewel's turn to choose. When her mother had finished naming the remaining titles, the child hesitated and lifted her eyebrows and shoulders as she gave the reader a meaning glance. Mrs. Evringham wondered what was in her mind, and, after a minute's thought, Jewel turned to Anna Belle, sitting wide-eyed against a tree.

"Just excuse me one minute, dearie," she said; then, coming close to her mother's ear, she whispered: —

"Is there anything in 'The Talking Doll' to hurt Anna Belle's feelings?"

"No, I think she 'd rather like it," returned Mrs. Evringham.

"You see," whispered Jewel, "she does n't know she 's a doll."

"Of course not," said Mrs. Evringham.

Jewel sat back: "I choose," she said aloud, "I choose 'The Talking Doll.'"

As Anna Belle only maintained her usual amiable

look of interest, Mrs. Evringham proceeded to read aloud as follows: —

When Gladys opened her eyes on her birthday morning, the sun was streaming across her room, all decorated in rose and white. It was the prettiest room any little girl could have, and everything about the child looked so bright, one would have expected her to laugh just for sympathy with the gay morning; but as she sat up in bed she yawned instead and her eyes gazed soberly at the dancing sunbeams.

"Ellen," she called, and a young woman came into the room.

"Oh, you 're awake, Miss Gladys. Is n't this a fine birthday Mother Nature 's fixed up for you?"

The pleasant maid helped the little girl to bathe and dress, and, as the toilet went on, tried to bring a cheerful look into Gladys's face. "Now what are you hoping your mother has for you?" she asked, at last.

"I don't know," returned the child, very near a pout. "There is n't anything I want. I 've been trying to think what I 'd like to have, and I can't think of a thing." She said this in an injured tone, as if the whole world were being unkind to her.

Ellen shook her head. "You are a very unlucky child," she returned impressively.

"I am not," retorted Gladys, looking at Ellen in astonishment. The idea that she, whom her father and mother watched from morning until night as their greatest treasure, could be called unlucky! She had never expressed a wish in her life that had not been gratified. "You must n't say such things to me,

Ellen," added the child, vexed that her maid did not look sorry for having made such a blunder.

Ellen had taken care of her ever since she was born, and no one should know better what a happy, petted life she had led; but Ellen only shook her head now; and when Gladys was dressed she went down to the dining-room where her parents were waiting to give her a birthday greeting.

They kissed her lovingly, and then her mother said: —

"Well, what does my little girl want for her gift?"

"What have you for me?" asked Gladys, with only faint interest. She had closets and drawers full of toys and books and games, and she was like a person who has been feasted and feasted, and then is asked to sit down again at a loaded table.

For answer her mother produced from behind a screen a beautiful doll. It was larger and finer than any that Gladys had owned, and its parted, rosy lips showed pearly little teeth within.

Gladys looked at it without moving, but began to smile. Then her mother put her hand about the doll's waist and it suddenly said: "Ma-ma — Pa-pa."

"Oh, if she can talk!" cried Gladys, looking quite radiant for a minute, and running forward she took the doll in her arms.

"Her name is Vera," said the mother, happy at having succeeded in pleasing her child. "Here is something that your grandmother sent you, dear. Is n't it a quaint old thing?" and Gladys's mother showed her a heavy silver bowl with a cover. On the cover was engraved, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

"I don't know where your grandma found such an odd thing nor why she sent it to a little girl; but she says it will be an heirloom for you."

Gladys looked at the bowl and handled it curiously. The cover fitted so well and the silver was so bright she was rather pleased at having such a grown-up possession.

"It is evidently valuable," said her mother. "I will have it put with our silver."

"No," returned Gladys, and her manner was the willful one of a spoiled child. "I want it in my room. I like it."

"Oh, very well," answered her mother. "Grandma will be glad that you are pleased."

An excursion into the country had been planned for Gladys to-day. She had some cousins there, a girl of her own age and a boy a little older. She had not seen Faith and Ernest for five years. Their father and mother were away on a long visit now, so the children were living in the old farmhouse with an aunt of their father's to take care of them. Gladys's mother thought it would be a pleasant change for her in the June weather, and it was an attractive idea to Gladys to think of giving these country cousins a sight of her dainty self, her fine clothes, and perhaps she would take them one or two old toys that she liked the least; but the coming of Vera put the toy idea completely out of her head. What would Faith say to a doll who could talk!

Gladys was in haste now for the time to come to take the train; and as Vera was well supplied with various costumes, the doll was soon arrayed, like her little

mamma, in pretty summer street-dress and ready to start.

Gladys's father had a guest to-day, so his wife remained at home with him, and Ellen took charge of the birthday excursion.

Driving to the station and during the hour's ride on the train, Gladys was in gay spirits, chattering about her new doll and arranging its pretty clothes, and each time Vera uttered her words, the child would laugh, and Ellen laughed with her. Gladys was a girl ten years old, but to the maid she was still a baby, and although Ellen thought she saw the child's parents making mistakes with her every day, she, like them, was so relieved when Gladys was good-natured that she joined heartily in the little girl's pleasure now over her birthday present.

"Won't Faith's eyes open when she sees Vera?" asked Gladys gayly.

"I expect they will," returned Ellen. "What have you brought with you for her and her brother?"

The child shrugged her shoulders. "Nothing. I meant to but I forgot it, because I was so pleased with Vera. Is n't her hair sweet, Ellen?" and Gladys twisted the soft, golden locks around her fingers.

"Yes, but it would have been nice to bring something for those children. They don't have so much as you do."

"Of course not. I don't believe they have much of anything. You know they 're poor. Mother sends them money sometimes, so it 's all right." And Gladys poked the point of her finger within Vera's rosy lips and touched her little white teeth.

Ellen shook her head and Gladys saw it and pouted. "Why did n't *you* think of it, then, or mother?" she asked.

"You won't have somebody to think for you all your life," returned Ellen. "You 'd better be beginning to think about other people yourself, Gladys. What 's that it said on your grandmother's silver bowl?"

"Oh, I don't know. Something about giving and receiving."

"Yes. 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' that 's what it said," and Ellen looked hard at her companion, though with a very soft gaze, too; for she loved this little girl because she had spent many a wakeful night and busy day for her.

"Yes, I remember," returned Gladys. "Grandma had that put on because she wanted me to know how much she would rather give me things than have people give things to her. Anyway, Ellen, if you are going to be cross on my birthday I wish mother had come with me, instead;" and a displeased cloud came over the little girl's face, which Ellen hastened to drive away by changing the subject. She knew her master and mistress would reprove her for annoying their idol. They always said, when their daughter was unusually naughty or selfish, "Oh, Gladys will outgrow all these things. We won't make much of them."

By the time they reached the country station, Gladys's spirits were quite restored and, carrying her doll, she left the train with Ellen.

Faith and Ernest were there to meet them. No wonder the children did not recognize each other, for they had been so young when last they met; and when

Gladys's curious eyes fell upon the country girl, she felt like a princess who comes to honor humble subjects with a visit.

Faith and Ernest had never thought about being humble subjects. Their rich relative who lived in some unknown place and sometimes sent their mother gifts of money and clothing had often roused their gratitude, and when she had written that their cousin Gladys would like to visit the farm on her birthday, they at once set their wits to work to think how they could make her have a good time. They always had a good time themselves, and now that vacation had begun, the days seemed very full of fun and sunshine. They thought it must be hard to live in a city street as their mother had described it to them, and even though she was away now and could not advise them, they felt as if they could make Gladys enjoy herself.

Faith's hair was shingled as short as her brother's, and her gingham frock was clean and fresh. She watched each person descend from the train, and when a pretty girl with brown eyes and curls appeared, carrying a large doll, Faith's bright gaze grew brighter, and she was delighted to find that it was Gladys. She took it for granted that kind-faced Ellen, so well dressed in black, was her aunt, and greeted her so, but Gladys's brown eyes widened.

"My mother could n't come, for father needed her," she explained. "This is my maid, Ellen."

"Oh," said Faith, much impressed by such elegance. "We thought aunt Helen was coming. Ernest is holding the horse over here," and she led the way to a

two-seated wagon where a twelve-year-old boy in striped shirt and old felt hat was waiting.

Faith made the introductions and then helped Gladys and Ellen into the back seat of the wagon, all unconscious of her cousin's wonder at the absence of silver mountings and broadcloth cushions. Then Faith climbed over the wheel into the seat beside her brother, and the horse started. She turned about so as to talk more easily with her guest.

"What a beautiful doll!" she said admiringly.

"Yes," returned Gladys, "this is my birthday, you know."

"Oh, then, is it new? I thought it was! Has n't she the prettiest clothes? Have you named her yet?"

"Her name is Vera. Mother says it means true, or truth, or something like that."

Ernest turned half around to glance at the object of the girls' admiration; but he thought Gladys herself a much more attractive creature than the doll.

"I suppose your cousin Gladys can't ask you to admire her doll much, Master Ernest," said Ellen. She liked these rosy children at once, and the fresh, sunlit air that had painted their cheeks.

"Oh, it 's pretty enough," returned Ernest, turning back and clucking to the horse.

Gladys enjoyed Faith's pleasure. She would not try to show off Vera's supreme accomplishment in this rattlety-banging wagon. How it did jounce over occasional stones in the country road!

Ellen smiled at her as the child took hold of her arm in fear of losing her balance. "That was a 'thank-ye-ma'am,'" she said, as the wagon suddenly bounded

over a little hillock. "Did n't you see what a pretty curtsy we all made?"

But Gladys thought it was rather uncomfortable and that Ernest drove too fast, considering the state of the roads.

"This wagon has such nice springs," said Faith. She was eager to take Vera into her own hands, but no wonder Gladys liked to hold her when she had only had her such a short time.

Aunt Martha was standing on the piazza to welcome the company when they arrived. She was an elderly woman with spectacles, and it had to be explained to her, also, that Ellen was not Gladys's mother.

The maid was so well dressed in her quiet street suit that aunt Martha groaned in spirit at first at the prospect of caring for a fashionable city servant; and it was a relief when the stranger looked up and said pleasantly: "I 'm just Ellen."

There was an hour left before dinner, and Faith and Ernest carried Gladys off to a place they called the grove. The farmhouse was painted in light yellow and white. It was built on a grassy slope, and at the foot of a gentle hill a pretty pond lay, and out from this flowed a brook. If one kept quite still he could hear the soft babble of the little stream even from the piazza. Nearer by was a large elm-tree, so wide-spreading that the pair of Baltimore orioles who hung their swaying nest on one limb scarcely had a bowing acquaintance with the robins who lived on the other side. The air was full of pleasant scents, and Gladys followed her hosts willingly, far to the right side of the house, where a stone wall divided the grounds from a piece of wood-

land. Her cousins bounded over the wall, and she tried to find a safe spot for her dainty, thin shoe, the large doll impeding her movements.

"Oh, let me take her!" cried Faith eagerly, seeing her cousin's predicament; and as she carefully lifted the beautiful Vera, she added: "Help Gladys over, Ernest."

Ernest was very unused to girls who had to be helped, and he was rather awkward in trying to give his cousin assistance, but as Gladys tetered on the unsteady stones, she grasped his strong shoulder and jumped down.

"Father and Ernest cleared this grove out for us," explained Faith. All the underbrush had been carried away and the straight, sweet-smelling pines rose from a carpet of dry needles. A hammock was swung between two trees. It was used more by the children's mother than by them, as they were too active to care for it; but Gladys immediately ran toward it, her recovered doll in her arms, and seated herself in the netting. Her cousins regarded her admiringly as she sat there pushing herself with her dainty shoe-tips.

"I 'll swing you," said Ernest, and running to her side began with such a will that Gladys cried out: —

"Oh, not so hard, not so hard!" and the boy dropped his hands, abashed.

Now, while they were both standing before her, was a good time for Gladys to give them her great surprise; so she put her hands about Vera's waist, and at once "Ma-ma — Pa-pa" sounded in the still grove.

Ernest pricked up his ears. "I hear a sheep," he said, looking about.

"I HEAR A SHEEP"

Gladys flushed, but turning toward Faith for appreciation, she made the doll repeat her accomplishment.

"It 's that dear Vera!" cried Faith, falling on her knees in the pine needles before Gladys. "Oh, make her do it again, Gladys, please do!"

Her visitor smiled and complied, pleased with her country cousin's delight.

"Think of a doll that can talk!" cried Faith.

"I think she bleats," laughed Ernest, and he mimicked Vera's staccato tones.

Faith laughed, too, but Gladys gave him a flash of her brown eyes.

"A boy does n't know anything about dolls," said Faith. "I should think you 'd be the happiest girl, Gl[illegible]"

"I am," returned Gladys complacently. "What sort of a doll have you, Faith?"

"Rag, tag, and bobtail," laughed Ernest.

"Now you keep still," said his sister. "I 'll show you my dolls when we go to dinner, Gladys. I don't play with them very much because Ernest does n't like to, and now it 's vacation we 're together a lot, you know; but I just love them, and if you were going to stay longer we 'd have a lot of fun."

Faith looked so bright as she spoke, Gladys wished she had brought something for her. She was n't so sure about Ernest. He was a nice-looking, strong boy, but he had made fun of Vera. At present he was letting off some of his superfluous energy by climbing a tree.

"Look out for the pitch, Ernest," said his sister warningly. "See, Gladys, I have a horse out here,"

and Faith went to where the low-growing limb of a pine sprang flexibly as she leaped upon it into an imaginary side-saddle. Gladys smiled at her languidly, as she bounded gayly up and down.

"I have a pony," returned Gladys, rocking gently in her swinging cradle.

"That must be splendid," said Faith. "Ernest rides our old Tom bareback around the pasture sometimes, but I can't."

Very soon the children were called to dinner, and wonderfully good it tasted to Gladys, who took note of cottage cheese, apple-butter, and doughnuts, and determined to order them at home the very next day.

As they were all rising from the table, a telegraph boy drove up in a buggy, and a telegram was handed to Ellen. Her face showed surprise as she read it, and she looked at aunt Martha.

"Could we stay here a few days?" she asked.

"What is it, Ellen?" demanded Gladys.

"Your father's friend wants him and your mother to take a trip with him, and your mother thinks you might like to stay here a while. I'm to answer, and she will send some clothes and things."

Aunt Martha had already learned to like good, sensible Ellen, and she replied cordially; so a telegram went back by the messenger boy, and Faith and Gladys both jumped up and down with pleasure at the prolonging of the visit. Ernest looked pleased, too. In spite of Gladys's rather languid, helpless ways, he admired her very much; so the children scampered away, Vera being left this time on a chair in the parlor.

"Do you like turtles?" asked Faith of the guest.

"I don't know," returned Gladys.

"Did n't you ever see any?" asked Ernest in astonishment.

"I don't believe so."

"Then come on!" cried the boy, with a joyous whoop. "We 'll go turtle-hunting."

Gladys skipped along with them until they reached the brook.

"Now Ernest will walk on that side of the water," said Faith, "and you and I will go on this."

"But what are we going to do?"

"Watch for turtles. You 'll see."

Ernest jumped across the brook. Gladys walked along the soft grass behind Faith, and the bubbling little stream swirled around its stones and gently bent its grasses as it ran through the meadow.

In a minute Faith's practiced eye caught sight of a dark object on a stone directly in front of them.

It was a turtle sunning himself. His black shell was covered with bright golden spots, and his eyes were blinking slowly in the warm light.

"Quick, Ernest!" cried Faith, for it was on his side.

He sprang forward, but not quickly enough. The turtle had only to give one vigorous push of his hind feet and, plump, he fell into the water. Instantly the brook became muddy at that point, for Mr. Turtle knew that he must be a very busy fellow if he escaped from the eager children who were after him.

He burrowed into the soft earth while Ernest and Faith threw themselves flat on their stomachs. Gladys opened her brown eyes wide to see her cousins, their

sleeves stripped up, plunging their hands blindly about, hoping to trap their reluctant playfellow.

Ernest was successful, and bringing up the muddy turtle, soused him in the water until his golden spots gleamed again.

"Hurrah!" cried Faith, "we have him. Let me show him to Gladys, please, Ernest," and the boy put the turtle into the hand stretched across to him.

As soon as the creature found that kicking and struggling did not do any good, it had drawn head, legs, and tail into its pretty shell house.

Faith put him into Gladys's hand, but the little city girl cried out and dropped him on the grass.

"Oh, excuse me," laughed Faith. "I thought you wanted to see it."

"I do, but I don't believe I want to touch it."

"Why, they're the dearest, cleanest things," said Faith, and picking up the turtle she showed her cousin its pretty under shell of cream color and black, and the round splashes of gold on its black back.

"But I saw it kicking and scratching Ernest, and putting its head way out," said Gladys doubtfully, "and I don't like to hold it because it might put out all its legs and things again."

Faith laughed. "It only has four legs and a cunning little tail; and we know how to hold it so it can't scratch us, anyway; but it won't put out its head again until it thinks we've gone away, because this is an old one. See, the shell covers my hand all over. The littler ones are livelier and more willing to put out their heads. I don't believe we've had this one before, Ernest," added Faith, examining the creature. "We

nearly always use the big ones for horses," she explained, "and then there 's a gimlet hole through the shell."

"Who would do that?" exclaimed Gladys, drawing back.

"Ernest. Why!" observing her cousin's look of horror. "It does n't hurt them. We would n't hurt them for anything. We just love them, and if they were n't geese they 'd love us, too."

"Use them for horses? What do you mean?"

"Why, they draw my smallest dolls in lovely chariots."

"Oh," returned Gladys. This sounded mysterious and interesting. She even took the clean, compact shell into her hands for a minute before Faith gathered up her dress skirt and dropped the turtle into it, the three proceeding along the brook side, taking up their watch again.

The warm, sunny day brought the turtles out, and the next one they saw was not larger than the palm of Ernest's hand. It was swimming leisurely with the current.

They all three saw it at once, but quick as Faith was, the lively little creature was quicker. As she and Ernest both darted upon it, it scrambled for her side and burrowed swiftly under the bank. This was the best stronghold for the turtle, and the children knew it.

"I just can't lose him, I can't!" cried Faith, and Gladys wondered at the fearless energy with which she dived her hand into the mud, feeling around, unmindful which portion of the little animal she grasped if she only caught him; and catch him she did. With a squeal

of delight she pulled out the turtle, who continued to swim vigorously, even when in mid air.

"He 's splendid and lively!" exclaimed Faith. "You can see him go on the grass, Gladys," and the little girl put the creature down, heading him away from the brook, and he made good time, thinking he was getting away from his captor. "You see, Ernest harnesses them to a little pasteboard box, and I put in my smallest dolls and we have more *fun;*" but by this time the turtle realized that he was traveling inland, and turned around suddenly in the opposite direction.

"No, no, pet!" cried Faith gayly. "Not yet," and she picked up the lively one. "See, you hold them this way;" she held the shell between her thumb and middle finger and the sharp little claws sawed the air in vain. "There, cunning," she added, looking into the turtle's bright eyes, "go see your auntie or uncle, or whoever it is," and she put it into her dress with the other one, and they walked on.

"I hope we shall find a prince," said Ernest. "Gladys ought to see one of those."

"Yes, indeed," responded Faith. "They 're snapping turtles, really, and they grow bigger than these common ones; but they 're so handsome and hard to find we call them princes. Their shells are gray on top and smooth and polished, like satin; and then, underneath, oh, they 're beautiful; sometimes plain ivory, and sometimes bright red; and they have lovely yellow and black splashes where the lower shell joins the upper. I wish you could see a baby turtle, Gladys. Once I found one no bigger than a quarter of a dollar. I don't believe it had ever been in the water."

"I wish I could," returned Gladys, with enthusiasm. "I would n't be a bit afraid of a little, *little* one."

"Of course that one she found was just a common turtle, like these," said Ernest, "but a baby prince is the thing we want."

"Yes, indeed," sighed Faith ecstatically. "If I could just once find a baby prince with a red under shell, I don't know what I 'd do! I 'd be too happy for anything. I 've hunted for one for two whole summers. The big ones do snap so that, though they 're so handsome, you can't have much fun with them."

The children walked on, Gladys now quite in the spirit of the hunt. They found two more spotted turtles before they turned again to retrace their steps.

Now it proved that this was to be a red-letter day in the history of their turtle hunts, for on the way home they found the much sought baby prince. He had been in this world long enough to become a polished little creature, with all his points of beauty brought out; but not long enough to be suspicious and to make a wild scramble when he saw the children coming.

Faith's trained eyes fell first upon the tiny, dark object, sunning himself happily in all his baby innocence, and blinking at the lovely green world surrounding his shallow stone. Her heart beat fast and she said to herself, "Oh, I *know* it 's a common one!" She tiptoed swiftly nearer. It was not a common one. It was a prince! It *was* a prince!

She did n't know whether to laugh or cry, as, holding her skirt-bag of turtles with one hand, she lightly tiptoed forward, and, falling on her knees in front of the stone, gathered up the prince, just as he saw her

and pushed with his tiny feet to slip off the rock into the brook.

"Oh, oh, *oh!*" was all she could say as she sat there, swaying herself back and forth, and holding the baby to her flushed cheek.

"What is it? What?" cried Ernest, jumping across the brook to her side. She smiled at him and Gladys without a word, and held up her prize, showing the pretty red under shell, while the baby, very much astonished to find himself turned over in mid air, drew himself into his house.

"Oh, the cunning, *cunning* thing!" cried Gladys, her eyes flashing radiantly. "I 'm so glad we found him!"

Gladys, like a good many beside herself, became fired with enthusiasm to possess whatever she saw to be precious in the sight of others. Yesterday, had she seen the baby prince in some store she would not have thought of asking her mother to buy it for her; but to-day it had been captured, a little wild creature for which Faith had been searching and hoping during two summers; and poor Gladys had been so busy all her life wondering what people were going to get for her, and wondering whether she should like it very well when she had it, that now, instead of rejoicing that Faith had such a pleasure, she began to feel a hot unrest and dissatisfaction in her breast.

"He is a little beauty," she said, and then looked at her cousin and waited for her to present to her guest the baby turtle.

"Why did n't I see it first?" [illegible] ight, her heart beating fast, for Faith show[illegible] of giving

up her treasure. "Do you suppose we could find another?" she asked aloud, making her wistfulness very apparent as they again took up the march toward home.

"Well, I guess not," laughed Ernest. "Two of those in a day? I guess not. Let me carry it for you, Faith. You have to hold up your dress skirt."

"Oh, thank you, Ernest, I don't mind, and he 's *so* cunning!"

Ernest kept on with the girls, now, on their side of the brook. It would be an anti-climax to catch any more turtles this afternoon.

"If I could find one," said Gladys, "I would carry it home for my aquarium."

"Oh, have you an aquarium?" asked Faith with interest.

"Yes, a fine one. It has gold and silver fish and a number of little water creatures, and a grotto with plants growing around it."

"How lovely it must be," said Faith, and Gladys saw her press her lips to the baby prince's polished back.

"She 's an awfully selfish girl," thought Gladys. "I would n't treat company so for anything!"

"You 'll see the aquarium Faith and I have," said Ernest. "It 's only a tub, but we get a good deal of fun out of it. It 's our stable, too, you see. Did you notice we caught one of our old horses to-day? Let 's see him, Faith," and Ernest poked among the turtles and brought out one with a little hole made carefully in the edge of his shell.

"It seems very cruel to me," said Gladys, with a superior air.

"Oh, it is n't," returned Faith eagerly. "We 'd rather hurt each other than the turtles, would n't we, Ernest?"

"I guess so," responded the boy, rather gruffly. He did n't wish Gladys to think him too good.

"It does n't hurt them a bit," went on Faith, "but you know turtles are lazy. They 're all relations of the tortoise that raced with the hare in Æsop's fable." Her eyes sparkled at Gladys, who smiled slightly. "And they are n't very fond of being horses, so we only keep them a day or two and then let them go back into the brook. I think that 's about as much fun as anything, don't you, Ernest?"

"Oh, I don't know," responded her brother, who was beginning to feel that all this turtle business was a rather youthful pastime for a member of a baseball team.

"You see," went on Faith, "we put the turtles on the grass only a foot or two away from the brook, and wait."

"And we do have to wait," added Ernest, "for they always retire within themselves and pull down the blind, as soon as we start off with them anywhere."

"But we press a little on their backs," said Faith, "and then they put out their noses, and when they smell the brook they begin to travel. It 's such fun to see them dive in, *ker-chug!* Then they scurry around and burrow in the mud, getting away from us, just as if we were n't willing they should. They are pretty silly, I must say," laughed Faith, "and it 's the hardest thing to make them understand that you love them; but," her tone changed tenderly as she held up the baby prince,

"*you 'll* know I love you, won't you, dear, when I give you tiny little pieces of meat every day!"

The cloud on Gladys's face deepened.

"Come on, let 's hustle and put the turtles away and go for a row. Do you like to row, Gladys?" asked Ernest.

"Yes, I guess so," she responded, rather coldly.

They ran up the hill to the side of the house where was a shallow tub of water with a rock in the middle, its top high and dry. There was also a floating shingle; so the steeds could swim or sun themselves just as suited their fancy. The upper edge of the tub was covered with tin so that sharp little claws could not find a way to climb out.

"It 's fun to see them go in," said Faith, placing one on the rock and one on the shingle, where they rested at first without sign of life; but in a minute out came head and legs and, spurning the perches with their strong feet, plump the turtles went into the water and to the bottom, evidently convinced that they were outwitting their captors.

"Don't you want to choose one special one for yours, Gladys? It 's fun to name them," said Faith.

The visitor hesitated only a moment. "I choose the baby, then," she said. "You know I 'm afraid of the big ones."

Ernest thought she was joking. It did not occur to him that any one who had seen Faith's happiness in finding the prince could seriously think of taking it from her.

"Yes," he laughed, "I guess you and I won't get a chance at that one, Gladys."

Faith's expression changed and her eyes grew

thoughtful. "Hurry up, girls," continued Ernest, "come on, we won't have very much time."

So the turtles, prince and all, were left disporting themselves in the tub, and the trio went down to the pond, where Ernest untied his boat. Faith jumped in, but Gladys timorously placed her little foot upon the unsteady gunwale, and the children had to help her into the boat as they had done over the wall.

"I wish I 'd brought Vera," she said when she was seated and Ernest was pushing the boat off.

"Next time we will," replied Faith.

"I don't see why Ernest could n't go back for her now," said Gladys. "I 'm not used to walking so much and I 'm too tired to go myself."

"You want me to run up the hill after a *doll!*" asked the boy, laughing. He began to believe his pretty cousin was very fond of joking. "Something might happen to her before you saw her," he added mischievously.

The pond was a charming sheet of water. Trees lined its edges in summer, and it was a great place for sport in winter. Faith and Ernest chattered to their cousin of all the coasting and skating, and their bright faces and jolly stories only increased the uncomfortable feeling that Gladys had allowed to slip into her heart.

Her cousins had more fun than she did. It was n't fair. She had no eyes for the pretty scenery about her, as Ernest's strong arms sent the boat flying along. Faith noticed her changed looks and for the first time wondered how it was going to seem to have Gladys to take care of for — they could n't tell how long; but she only tried the harder to bring back the bright look her cousin had worn at dinner time.

In a few minutes Gladys began to rock the boat from side to side.

"Don't do that, please," said Ernest.

There was a tone of command in his voice, and the spoiled child only rocked the harder.

"None of that, I tell you, Gladys," he said sharply.

"Please don't," added Faith.

But the error that Gladys had let creep in was enjoying her cousin's anxiety, and she smiled teasingly as she went on rocking. She had condescended to come out to the farm, and she would let these country children see if they could order her about.

Ernest said no more, but he promptly turned the boat around and pulled for the shore.

"What are you doing?" asked Gladys.

"Going ashore."

"I don't want to," she exclaimed, her cheeks flushing. "I want to go up there." She pointed to a spot in the distance. "I want to go around that corner and see what there is there."

"Not to-day," replied Ernest, pulling sturdily.

We won't look into Gladys's heart and see what went on there then, because it is too unpleasant.

"You see we're the crew," said Faith, a little scared by her cousin's flashing eyes and crimson cheeks. "We have to do what Ernest says. He knows a lot about boats, Gladys, and it *is* dangerous to rock. The pond is real deep."

"I shall come out in the boat alone, then," declared Gladys.

"Oh, no, you won't," remarked Ernest, smiling. "People that rock boats need a keeper."

Faith's eyes besought him. "I 'll take you out to-morrow if you 'll promise to sit still," he went on; "but if anything happened to the boat, you see I could n't save both of you, and I 'd be likely to try to save Faith; so you 'd better go ashore now and think it over."

Gladys stared at him in utter amazement that any one could speak to her so. Why had she ever come to the farm!

However, she quickly put on a little air of indifference and only said: —

"How silly to be so afraid!"

All she cared for now was to get to Ellen and pour out her troubles, and she was quite silent while she jumped ashore, although the wavering boat made her clutch Faith's hand hard.

Tender-hearted Faith felt very sorry for her cousin, so she began talking about Vera as they went up the hill, saying how anxious she was to hear her speak again.

"I 'll never let you!" exclaimed that strong error that had taken possession of Gladys, but her lips set tight and she was glad to see Ellen come out on the piazza.

As the children approached they saw that the maid had something bright in her hand, and that she was smiling.

"Well, Gladys," she said, "your mother 's sent a trunk, and this was with your clothes. What do you think of that? I expect your mother thought you might like to have it."

Gladys recognized the silver bowl with satisfaction. She was glad to have Faith and Ernest see the sort of things she was used to.

"Oh, it looks like a wishing bowl," cried Faith in admiration.

"It is a solid silver bowl that my grandmother sent me for my birthday," remarked Gladys coolly, and she took it from Ellen.

"Let 's see what it says on it," said Faith, and she read the inscription aloud. Then she added: "It does look just like the wishing bowl in our story."

"What was that?" asked Gladys.

"Why, it was a bright, beautiful silver bowl with a cover, and all you had to do if you wanted something was to say: —

Pretty little silver dish,
Give me, pray, my dearest wish;

and then, when you took off the cover, whatever you had asked for was in the bowl!"

Gladys shrugged her shoulders. Then she took hold of Ellen's hand and drew her into the house and closed the door after them.

Faith and Ernest did not attempt to follow. They sat down on the steps and looked at one another.

"She 's hopping, is n't she?" said Ernest softly.

"Oh, dear," returned Faith dejectedly, "and it all began with the baby prince."

"What do you mean?"

"She wants him for her aquarium."

Ernest paused a minute to think over his cousin's words and actions; then he broke out indignantly: "Well, she won't get him."

"I have hunted for him so long!" mourned Faith, "and his shell is so red; but, Ernest, did n't you notice what it said on that bowl?"

"Yes, I did; but Gladys is a great baby and she is n't going to get everything. Tell her you 'll exchange

the prince for that baa-ing doll of hers, if you like it. I tell you what, Faith, I 've had about enough of her after that boat business. If she 's going to stay on here I shall go off with the fellows."

Meanwhile Gladys had seized the beautiful Vera and drawn Ellen off upstairs to their room. The maid saw the signs of storm in her face, and her own grew troubled, for it was one thing to vex Gladys and quite another to appease her.

"I 'm not going to stay here," announced the little girl, as soon as the door was closed, her breath coming fast. "Faith and Ernest are the most selfish, impolite children I ever saw!"

Ellen sighed, and, sitting down, drew the child into her lap.

She continued excitedly: "We went turtle-hunting and found a lot of scrabbly things that I could n't bear, but Faith and Ernest like them. Then when we found a pretty little young one that I would n't be a bit afraid of, Faith kept it for herself. Just think, when I was company, and she had all the others beside. I 'm just crazy to have it, and they 're *very* hard to find and we can't *ever* find another. Should n't you think she 'd feel ashamed? Then when we went out in the boat, just because I moved around a little and made the boat rock, Ernest brought us in when I did n't want to come a bit. I even *told* him I did n't want to come in, because I wanted to see a part of the pond that looked pretty, but he brought us just the same. Did you ever *hear* of such impoliteness?"

Ellen had had too much experience with the little girl not to know that there was another side to this

story; but she gathered Gladys down in her arms with the curly head on her shoulder, and, while a few hot tears fell from the brown eyes, she rocked her, and it comforted the little girl's sore places to feel her nurse's love.

"I 'm glad Ernest brought you in," said Ellen, after a minute of silent rocking. "If anything happened to you, you know that would be the last of poor Ellen. I could never go back to town."

Gladys gave a sob or two.

"These children have n't nearly so much as you have," went on Ellen quietly. "Perhaps Faith was as happy over the little turtle as you are over your talking doll. She has n't any rich mother to give her things, you know."

"They have *lots* of things. They have a great deal more fun in winter than I do," returned Gladys hotly.

Ellen patted her. "You have too much, Gladys," she replied kindly. "When I said this morning that you were unlucky, you could n't understand it; but perhaps this visit to the farm will make you see differently. There 's such a thing as having too much, dear, and that sentence on your silver bowl is as true as true. Now there 's the supper bell. Let me wash your face."

Gladys was deeply offended, but she was also hungry, and she began to wonder if there would be apple-butter and cottage cheese again.

There was, and the little girl did full justice to the supper, especially to aunt Martha's good bread and butter; but when the meal was over she refused to go out and romp on the lawn with her cousins.

"Gladys is n't used to so much running around," said Ellen pleasantly to the other children. "I guess she 's a pretty sleepy girl and will get into bed early."

So when Ellen had helped aunt Martha with the supper dishes, Gladys went upstairs with her, to go to bed.

She was half undressed when some one knocked softly, and Faith came into the room. The silver bowl stood on a table near the door, and the little girl paused to look at it and examine the wreath of roses around its edge. "I never saw one so handsome," she said. Then she came forward. "I thought perhaps you 'd let me see you undress Vera," she added.

"She is undressed," answered Gladys shortly.

"Oh, yes!" Faith went up to the bed where the doll lay in its nightdress. "May I make her speak once?"

"No, I 'm afraid you might hurt her," returned Gladys shortly, and Ellen gave her a reproachful look. Gladys did n't care! How could a girl expect to be so selfish as Faith, and then have everybody let her do just what she wanted to?

Faith drew back from the bed. "I wish you 'd let me see you wish once on your bowl before I go away," she said.

"How silly," returned Gladys. "Do you suppose I believe in such things? You can wish on it yourself, if you like."

"Oh, that would n't be any use," returned Faith eagerly, "because it only works for the one it belongs to."

"Perhaps you would n't like to have me make a

wish and get it," said Gladys, thinking of the baby prince's lovely polished tints and bewitching little tail.

"Yes, I would. I 'd *love* to. Do, Gladys, do, and see what happens."

Gladys curved her lips scornfully, but the strong wish sprang in her thought, and with a careless movement she pulled off the silver cover.

Her mouth fell open and her eyes grew as big as possible; for she had wished for the prince, and there he was, creeping about in the bowl and lifting his little head in wonder at his surroundings.

"Why, Faith!" was all she could say. "Where did it come from?"

"The brook, of course," returned Faith, clapping her hands in delight at her cousin's amazement. "Take him out and let 's see whether he 's red or plain ivory underneath."

"Will he scrabble?" asked Gladys doubtfully.

"No-o," laughed Faith.

So the little city girl took up the turtle and lo, he was as beautiful a red as the one of the afternoon.

"Is n't he lovely!" she exclaimed, not quite liking to look her cousin in the eyes. "Where shall I put him for to-night?"

"We 'll put a little water in your wash-bowl, not much, for they are so smart about climbing out."

Ellen, also, was gazing at the royal infant. "He is a pretty little thing," she said, "but for pity's sake, Faith, fix it so he won't get on to my bare feet!"

Later, when they were alone and Ellen kissed Gladys good-night, she looked closely into her eyes. "Now you 're happier, I suppose," she said.

"Of course. Won't he be cunning in my aquarium?" asked Gladys, returning her look triumphantly.

"Yes." Vera was in bed, also, and to please the child, Ellen stooped and kissed the doll's forehead, too. "God be good," she said gently, "to the poor little girl who gets everything she wants!"

A few minutes after the light was out and Ellen had gone, Gladys pulled Vera nearer to her. "Was n't that a silly sort of thing for Ellen to say?" she asked.

"I don't think so," returned Vera.

Gladys drew back. "Did you answer me?" she said.

"Certainly I did."

"Then you really can talk!" exclaimed Gladys joyfully.

"At night I can," said Vera.

"Oh, I 'm so glad. I 'm so glad!" and Gladys hugged her.

"I 'm not so sure that you will be," returned Vera coolly.

"Why not?"

"Because I have to speak the truth. You know my name is Vera."

"Well, I should hope so. Did you suppose I would n't want you to speak the truth?" Gladys laughed.

"Yes. You don't hear it very often, and you may not like it."

"Why, what a thing to say!"

"Ellen tries, sometimes, but you won't listen."

Gladys kept still and her companion proceeded:

"She knows all the toys and books and clothes and pets that you have at home, and she sees you forgetting all of them because Faith has just one thing pretty enough for you to wish for."

By this time Gladys had found her tongue. "You 're just as impolite as you can be, Vera!" she exclaimed.

"Of course. You always think people are impolite who tell you the truth; but I explained to you that I have to. Who was impolite when you rocked the boat, although Ernest asked you not to?"

"He was as silly as he could be to think there was any danger. Don't you suppose I know enough not to rock it too far? And then think how impolite he was to say right out that he would save Faith instead of me if we fell into the water. I can tell you my father would lock him up in prison if he did n't save me."

"Well, you are n't so precious to anybody else," returned Vera. "Why would people want a girl around who thinks only of herself and what she wants. I 'm sure Faith and Ernest will draw a long breath when you get on the cars to go back."

"Oh, I don't believe they will," returned Gladys, ready to cry.

"What have you done to make them glad you came? You did n't bring them anything, although you knew they could n't have many toys, and it was because you were so busy thinking how much lovelier your doll was than anything Faith could have. Then the minute Faith found one nice thing" —

"Don't say that again," interrupted Gladys. "You 've said it once."

"You behaved so disagreeably that she had to give it to you."

"You have no right to talk so. The prince came up from the brook, Faith said so."

"Oh, she was playing a game with you and she knew you understood. It is n't pleasant to have to say such things to you, Gladys, but I 'm Vera and I have to — I should n't think you could lift your head up and look Faith and Ernest in the face to-morrow morning. What must Ernest think of you!"

Gladys's cheeks were very hot. "Did n't you see how glad Faith was when she gave — I mean when I found the prince in the bowl? I guess you have n't read what it says on that silver cover or you would n't talk so."

"Oh, yes, I have. That 's truth, too, but you have n't found it out yet."

"Well, I wish I had brought them something," said Gladys, after a little pause. "Why," with a sudden thought, "there 's the wishing-bowl. I 'll get something for them right now!"

She jumped out of bed, and striking a match, lighted the candle. Vera followed her, and as Gladys seated herself on one side of the little table that held the silver bowl, Vera climbed into a chair on the other side. Gladys looked into her eyes thoughtfully while she considered. She would give Faith something so far finer than the baby prince that everybody would praise her for her generosity, and no one would remember that she had ever been selfish. Ah, she knew what she would ask for!

"For Faith first," she said, addressing Vera, then

looking at the glinting bowl she silently made her wish, then with eager hand lifted off the cover.

Ah! Ah! What did she behold! A charming little bird, whose plumage changed from purple to gold in the candle light, stood on a tiny golden stand at the bottom of the bowl.

Gladys lifted it out, and as soon as it stood on her hand, it began to warble wonderfully, turning its head from side to side like some she had seen in Switzerland when she was there with her mother.

"Oh, Vera, is n't it *sweet!*" she cried in delight.

"Beautiful!" returned Vera, smiling and clapping her little hands.

When the song ceased Gladys looked thoughtful again. "I don't think it 's a very appropriate present for Faith," she said, "and I 've always wanted one, but we could never find one so pretty in our stores."

Vera looked at her very soberly.

"Now you just stop staring at me like that, Vera. I guess it 's mine, and I have a right to keep it if I can think of something that would please Faith better. Now let me see. I must think of something for Ernest. I 'll just give him something so lovely that he 'll wish he 'd bitten his tongue before he spoke so to me in the boat."

Gladys set the singing bird in her lap, fixed her eyes on the bowl, and again decided on a wish.

Taking off the cover, a gold watch was seen reposing on the bottom of the bowl. "That 's it, that 's what I wished for!" she cried gladly, and she took out the little watch, which was a wonder. On its side was a fine engraving of boys and girls skating on a frozen pond.

Gladys's bright eyes caught si
which she touched, and instantly
hour and then told off the quarters and minutes.

"Oh, it's a repeater like uncle Frank's!" she cried, "and so small, too! Mother said I could n't have one until I was grown up. Won't she be surprised! I don't mean to tell her for ever so long where I got it."

"I thought it was for Ernest," remarked Vera quietly.

"Why, Vera," returned the child earnestly, "I should think you 'd see that no boy ought to have a watch like that. If it was a different *kind* I 'd give it to him, of course."

"Yes, if it was n't pretty and had nothing about it that you liked, you 'd give it to him, I suppose; and if the bird could n't sing, and had dark, broken feathers so that no child would care about it, you 'd give it to Faith, no doubt."

Gladys felt her face burn. She knew this was the truth, but oh, the entrancing bird, how could she see it belong to another? How could she endure to see Ernest take from his pocket this watch and show people its wonders!

"Selfishness is a cruel thing," said Vera. "It makes a person think she can have a good time being its slave until all of a sudden the person finds out that she has chains on that cannot be broken. You think you can't break that old law of selfishness that makes it misery to you to see another child have something that you have n't. Poor, unhappy Gladys!"

"Oh, but this bird, Vera!" Gladys looked down at

the little warbler. What did she see! A shriveled, sorry, brown creature, its feathers broken. She lifted it anxiously. No song was there. Its poor little beady eyes were dull.

She dropped it in disgust and again picked up the watch. What had happened to it? The cover was brass, the picture was gone. Pushing the spring had no effect.

"Oh, Faith and Ernest can have them now!" cried Gladys. Presto! in an instant bird and watch had regained every beauty they had lost, and twinkled and tinkled upon the astonished child's eyes and ears until she could have hugged them with delight; but suddenly great tears rolled from her eyes, for she had a new thought.

"What does this mean, Vera? Will they only be beautiful for Faith and Ernest?"

"You asked for them to enjoy the blessing of giving, you know, not to keep for yourself. Beside, they showed a great truth when they grew dull."

"How?" asked Gladys tearfully.

"That is the way they would look to you in a few months, after you grew tired of them; for it is the punishment of the selfish, spoiled child, that her possessions disgust her after a while. There is only one thing that lives, and remains bright, and brings us happiness, — that is thoughtful love for others. There 's nothing else, Gladys, there is nothing else. I am Vera."

"And I have none of it, none!" cried the unhappy child, and rising, she threw herself upon the bed, broken-hearted, and sobbed and sobbed.

Ellen heard her and came in from the next room.

"What is it, my lamb, what is it?" she asked, approaching the bed anxiously.

"Oh, Ellen, I can't tell you. I can never tell you!" wailed the child.

"Well, move over, dearie. I 'll push Vera along and there 'll be room for us all. There, darling, come in Ellen's arms and forget all about it."

Gladys cuddled close, and after a few more catches in her breath, she slept soundly.

When she wakened, the sunlight was streaming through the plain room, gilding everything as it had done in her rose and white bower yesterday at home. Ellen was moving about, all dressed. Gladys turned over and looked at Vera, pretty and innocent, her eyes closed and her lips parted over little white teeth. The child came close to the doll. The wonderful dream returned vividly.

"Your name is Vera. You had to," she whispered, and closed her eyes.

"How is the baby prince?" she asked, after a minute, jumping out of bed.

"He 's lively, but I expect he 's as hungry as you are. What 's he going to have?"

"Meat," replied Gladys, looking admiringly at the pretty little creature.

"I brought in my wash-bowl for your bath. I suppose princes can't be disturbed," said Ellen.

While she buttoned Gladys's clothes, the little girl looked at the silver bowl, and the chairs where she and Vera had sat last night in her dream. She even glanced about to see some sign of watch and bird, but could not find them. How busily her thoughts were working!

Sensible Ellen said nothing of bad dreams; and by the time Gladys went downstairs, her face looked interested and happy. After all, it was n't as though there was n't any God to help a person, and she had said a very fervent prayer, with her nose buried in Vera's golden curls, before she jumped out of bed.

She had the satin shell of the baby prince in her hand. He had drawn into it because he was very uncertain what was going to happen to him; but Gladys knew.

She said good-morning to her cousins so brightly that Faith was pleased; but pretty as she looked, smiling, Ernest saw the prince in her hand and was more offended with her than ever.

"I want to thank you, Faith," she said, "for letting the baby stay in my room all night. I had the most fun watching him while I was dressing."

She put the little turtle into her cousin's hand.

"Oh, but I gave him to you," replied Faith earnestly.

"After you hunted for him for two summers, I could n't be so mean as to take him. I 'm just delighted you found him, Faith," and Gladys had a very happy moment then, for she found she *was* happy. "Let 's give him some bits of meat."

"She 's all right," thought Ernest, with a swift revulsion of feeling, and he was as embarrassed as he was astonished when his cousin turned suddenly to him: —

"If you 'll take me in the boat again," she said, "I won't rock. I 'm sorry I did."

"It *is* a fool trick," blurted out Ernest, "but you 're all right, Gladys. I 'll take you anywhere you want to go."

Ellen had heard this conversation. Later in the morning she was alone for a minute with Gladys, and the little girl said: —

"Don't you think it would be nice, Ellen, when we get home, to make up a box of pretty things and send to Faith and Ernest?"

"I do, that," replied the surprised Ellen.

"I 'm going to ask mother if I can't send them my music-box. They have n't any piano."

"Why, you could n't get another, Gladys."

"I don't care," replied the child firmly. "It would be so nice for evenings and rainy days." She swallowed, because she had not grown tired of the music box.

Ellen put her hands on the little girl's brow and cheeks and remembered the sobbing in the night. "Do you feel well, Gladys?" she asked, with concern. This unnatural talk alarmed her.

"I never felt any better," replied the child.

"Well, I would n't say anything to them about the music-box, dearie."

Gladys smiled. "I know. You think I 'd be sorry after I let it go; but if I am I 'll talk with Vera."

Ellen laughed. "Do you think it will always be enough for you to hear her say 'Ma-ma, Pa-pa?'" she asked.

Gladys smiled and looked affectionately at her good friend; but her lips closed tightly together. Ellen knew all that Vera did; but the nurse loved her still! The child was to have many a tussle with the hard mistress whose chains she had worn all her short life, but Truth had spoken, and she had heard; and Love was coming to help in setting her free.

CHAPTER XIII

A HEROIC OFFER

JEWEL told her grandfather the tale of The Talking Doll while they walked their horses through a favorite wood-road, Mr. Evringham keeping his eyes on the animated face of the story-teller. His own was entirely impassive, but he threw in an exclamation now and then to prove his undivided attention.

"*You* know it 's more blessed to give than to receive, don't you, grandpa?" added Jewel affectionately, as she finished; "because you 're giving things to people all the time, and nobody but God can give you anything."

"I don't know about that," returned the broker. "Have you forgotten the yellow chicken you gave me?"

"No," returned Jewel seriously; "but I 've never seen anything since that I thought you would care for."

Mr. Evringham nodded. "I think," he said confidentially, "that you have given me something pretty nice in your mother. Do you know, I 'm very glad that she married into our family."

"Yes, indeed," replied Jewel, "so am I. Just supposing I had had some other grandpa!"

The two shook their heads at one another gravely. There were some situations that could not be contemplated.

"Why do you suppose I can't find any turtles in my brook?" asked the child, after a short pause. "Mother says perhaps they like meadows better than shady ravines."

"Perhaps they do; but," and the broker nodded knowingly, "there 's another reason."

"Why, grandpa, why?" asked Jewel eagerly.

"Oh, Nature is such a neat housekeeper!"

"Why, turtles must be lovely and clean."

"Yes, I know; and if Summer would just let the brook alone you might find a baby turtle for Anna Belle."

"She 'd love it. Her eyes nearly popped out when mother was telling about it."

"Well, there it is, you see. Now I 'd be ashamed to have you see that brook in August, Jewel." Mr. Evringham slapped the pommel of his saddle to emphasize the depth of his feelings.

"Why, what happens?"

"Dry — as — a — bone!"

"It *is?*"

"Yes, indeed. We shan't have been long at the seashore when Summer will have drained off every drop of water in that brook."

"What for?"

"House-cleaning, of course. I suppose she scrubs out and sweeps out the bed of that brook before she 'll let a bit of water come in again."

"Well, she *is* fussy," laughed Jewel. "Even Mrs. Forbes would n't do that."

"I ask you," pursued Mr. Evringham, "what would the turtles do while the war was on?"

"Why, they could n't live there, of course. Well, we won't be here while the ravine is empty of the brook, will we, grandpa? I should n't like to see it."

"No, we shall be where there 's 'water, water everywhere.' Even Summer won't attempt to houseclean the bottom of the sea."

Jewel thought a minute. "I wish she would n't do that," she said wistfully; "because turtles would be fun, would n't they, grandpa?"

Mr. Evringham regarded her quizzically. "I see what you want me to do," he replied. "You want me to give up Wall Street and become the owner of a menagerie, so you can have every animal that was ever heard of."

Jewel smiled and shook her head. "I don't believe I do yet. We 'll have to wait till everybody loves to be good."

"What has that to do with it?"

"Then the lions and tigers will be pleasant."

"Will they, indeed?" Mr. Evringham laughed. "All those good people won't shut them up in cages then, I fancy."

"No, I don't believe they will," replied Jewel.

"But about those turtles," continued her grandfather. "How would you like it next spring for me to get some for you for the brook?"

Jewel's eyes sparkled. "Would n't that be the most *fun?*" she returned, — "but then, there 's summer again," she added, sobering.

"What 's the reason that we could n't drive with them to the nearest river before the brook ran dry?"

"Perhaps we could," replied Jewel hopefully. "Does n't mother tell the *nicest* stories, grandpa?"

"She certainly does; and some of the most wonderful you don't hear at all. She tells them to me after you have gone to bed."

"Then you ought to tell them to me," answered Jewel, "just the way I tell mine to you."

Mr. Evringham shook his head. "They probably would n't make you open your eyes as wide as I do mine; you 're used to them. They 're Christian Science stories. Your mother has been treating my rheumatism, Jewel. What do you think of that?"

"Oh, I 'm glad," replied the child heartily, "because then you 've asked her to."

"How do you know I have?"

"Because she would n't treat you if you had n't; and mother says when people are willing to ask for it, then that 's the beginning of everything good for them. You know, grandpa," Jewel leaned toward him lovingly and added softly, "you know even *you* have to meet mortal mind."

"I should n't wonder," responded the broker dryly.

"And it 's so proud, and hates to give up so," said Jewel.

"I 'm an old dog," returned Mr. Evringham. "Teaching me new tricks is going to be no joke, but your mother undertakes it cheerfully. I 'm reading that book, 'Science and Health;' and she says I may have to read it through three times before I get the hang of it."

"I don't believe you will, grandpa, because it 's just as *plain*," said the child.

"You 'll help me, Jewel?"

"Yes, indeed I will;" the little girl's face was radiant. "And won't Mr. Reeves be glad to see you coming to church with us?"

"I don't know whether I shall ever make Mr. Reeves glad in that way or not. I 'm doing this to try to understand something of what you and your mother are so sure of, and what has made a man of your father. More than that, if there is any eternity for us, I propose to stick to you through it, and it may be more convenient to study here than off in some dim no-man's-land in the hereafter. If I remain ignorant, who can tell but the Power that Is will whisk you away from me by and by."

Jewel gathered the speaker's meaning very well, and now she smiled at him with the look he loved best; all her heart in her eyes. "He would n't. God is n't anybody to be afraid of," she said.

"Why, it tells us all through the Bible to fear God."

"Yes, of course it tells us to fear to trouble the One who loves us the best of all. Just think how even you and I would fear to hurt one another, and God is keeping us *alive* with *his* love!"

Half an hour afterward their horses cantered up the drive toward the house. Mrs. Evringham was seated on the piazza, sewing. Her husband had sent the summer wardrobe promptly, and she wore now a thin blue gown that looked charmingly comfortable.

"Genuine!" thought her father-in-law, as he came up the steps and met a smiling welcome from her clear eyes. He liked the simple manner in which she

dressed her hair. He liked h[illegible]exion, and carriage, and voice.

"I don't know but that [illegible] the better part here on the piazza, it is so [illegible]e said, "but I have been thinking of you rather remorsefully this afternoon, Julia. These excursions of Jewel's and mine are growing to seem rather selfish. H[illegible]e you ever learned to ride?"

"Never, and I don't wish to. Please believe how supremely content I am."

"My carriages are small. It is so long since I've had a family. When we return I shall get one that will hold us all."

"Oh, yes, grandpa," cried Jewel enthusiastically. "You and I on the front seat, driving, and mother and father on the back seat."

"Well, we have more than two months to decide how we shall sit. I fancy it will oftener be your father and mother in the phaeton and you and I on our noble steeds, eh, Jewel?"

"Yes, I think so, too," she returned seriously.

Mr. Evringham smiled slightly at his daughter. "The occasions when we differ are not numerous enough to mention," he remarked.

"I hope it may always be so," she replied, going on with her work.

"This looks like moving," observed the broker, wiping his forehead with his pocket-handkerchief and looking about on the still, green scene. "I think we had better plan to go to the shore next week."

Julia smiled and sighed. "Very well, but any change seems as if it might be for the worse," she said.

"Then you 've never tried summer in New Jersey," he responded. "I hear you are a great story-teller, Julia. If I should wear some large bows behind my ears, could n't I come to some of these readings?"

As no laugh from Jewel greeted this sally, he looked down at her. She was gazing off wistfully.

"What is it, Jewel?" he asked.

"I was wondering if it would n't seem a long time to Essex Maid and Star without us!"

"Dear me, dear me, how little you do know those horses!" and the broker shook his head.

"Why, grandpa? Will they like it?"

"Do you suppose for one minute that you could make them stay at home?"

"Are they going with us, grandpa?" Jewel began to hop joyfully, but her habit interfered.

"Certainly. They naturally want to see what sort of bits and bridles are being worn at the seashore this year."

"Do you realize what unfashionable people you are proposing to take, yourself, father?" asked Julia. She was visited by daily doubts in this regard.

The broker returned her glance gravely. "Have you ever seen Jewel's silk dress?" he asked.

The child beamed at him. "She *made* it!" she announced triumphantly.

"Then you must know," said Mr. Evringham, "that it would save any social situation."

Julia laughed over her sewing. "My machine came to-day," she said. "I meant to make something a little fine, but if we go in a few days" —

"Don't think of it," replied the host hastily. "You

are both all right. I don't want you to see a needle. I 'm sorry you are at it now."

"But I like it. I really do."

"I 'm going to take you to the coolest place on Long Island, but not to the most fashionable."

"That is good news," returned Julia. "Run along, Jewel, and dress for dinner."

"In one minute," put in Mr. Evringham. "She and I wish your opinion of something first."

He disappeared for a moment into the house and came back with a flat package which Jewel watched with curious eyes while he untied the string.

Silently he placed a photograph in his daughter's lap while the child leaned eagerly beside her.

"Why, why, how good!" exclaimed Mrs. Evringham, and Jewel's eyes glistened.

"Is n't grandpa's nose just splendid!" she said fervently.

"Why, father, this picture will be a treasure," went on Julia. Color had risen in her face.

The photograph showed Jewel standing beside her grandfather seated, and her arm was about his neck. It was such a natural attitude that she had taken it while waiting for the photographer to be ready. The daisy-wreathed hat hung from her hand, and she had not known when the picture was taken. It was remarkably lifelike, and the broker regarded it with a satisfaction none the less keen because he let the others do all the talking.

"And now we don't need it, grandpa," said the child.

"Oh, indeed we do!" exclaimed the mother; and Jewel, catching her grandfather's eyes, lifted her

shoulders. What did her mother know of their secret!

Mr. Evringham smoothed his mustache. "No harm to have it, Jewel," he replied, nodding at her. "No harm; a very good plan, in fact; for I suppose, even to oblige me, you can't refrain from growing up. And next we must get Star's picture, with you on his back."

"But you were n't on Essex Maid's," objected Jewel.

"We 'll have it taken both ways, then. It 's best always to be on the safe side."

From this day on there was no more chance for Jewel to hear a tale in the Story Book, until the move to the seashore was accomplished, for hot weather had evidently come to stay in Bel-Air Park. Mrs. Evringham felt loath to leave its green, still loveliness and her large shady rooms; but the New Jerseyite's heat panic had seized upon her father-in-law, and he pushed forward the preparations for flight.

"I can't pity you for remaining here," Julia said to Mrs. Forbes on the morning of departure.

"No, ma'am, you don't need to," returned the housekeeper. "Zeke and I are going off on trips, and we calculate to have a pretty good time of it. I 've been wanting to speak to you, Mrs. Evringham, about a business matter," continued Mrs. Forbes, her manner indicating that she had constrained herself to make an effort. "Mr. Evringham tells me you and Mr. Harry are to make your home with him. It 's a good plan," emphatically, "as right as right can be; for what he would do without Jewel is n't easy to think of; but it 's given me a lot to consider. I won't be necessary here

any more," the housekeeper tried to conceal what the statement cost her. She endeavored to continue, but could not, and Julia saw that she did not trust her voice.

"Mr. Evringham has not said that, I am sure," she returned.

"No, and he never would; but that should n't prevent my doing right. You can take care of him and his house now, and I wanted to tell you that I see that, plainly, and am willing to go when you all come back. I shall have plenty of time this summer to turn around and make my plans. There 's plenty of work in this world for willing hands to do, and I 'm a long way off from being worn out yet."

"I 'm so glad you spoke about this before we left," replied Mrs. Evringham, smiling on the brave woman. "Father has said nothing to me about it, and I am certain he would as soon dispense with one of the supports of the house as with you. We all want to be busy at something, and I have a glimmering idea of what my work is to be; and I think it is not housekeeping. I should be glad to have our coming disturb father's habits as little as possible, and certainly neither you or I should be the first to speak of any change."

Mrs. Forbes bit her lip. "Well," she returned, "you see I knew it would come hard on him to ask me to go, and I wanted you both to know that I 'd see it reasonably."

"It was good of you," said Julia; "and that is all we ever need to be sure of — just that we are willing to be led, and then, while we look to God, everything will come right."

The housekeeper drank in the sweet expression of the speaker's eyes, and smiled, a bit unsteadily. "Of course I 'd rather stay," she replied. "Transplanting folks is as hard and risky as trees. You can't ever be sure they 'll flourish in the new ground; but I want to do right. I 've been reading some in Zeke's book, 'Science and Health,' and there was one sentence just got hold of me:[1] 'Self-love is more opaque than a solid body. In patient obedience to a patient God, let us labor to dissolve with the universal solvent of Love the adamant of error — self-will, self-justification, and self-love!' Jewel 's helped me to dissolve enough so I could face handing over the keys of this house to her mother. I 'm not saying I could have offered them to everybody."

Mrs. Evringham smiled. "Thank you. I hope it is n't your duty to give them, nor mine to take them. We 'll leave all that to father. My idea is that he would send us all back to Chicago rather than give you up — his right hand."

Mrs. Forbes's face relaxed, and she breathed more freely than for many days. As she took her way out to the barn to report this conversation to Zeke, her state of mind agreed with that of her employer when he declared his pleasure that Julia had married into the family.

[1] *S. and H.*, page 242.

CHAPTER XIV

ROBINSON CRUSOE

A LONG stretch of white, fine sandy beach, packed hard; an orderly procession of waves, each one breaking in seething, snowy foam that ran or crept after a child's bare feet as she skipped back and forth, playing with them; that was Long Island to Jewel.

Of course there was a village and on its edge a dear, clean old farmhouse where they all lived, and in whose barn Essex Maid and Star found stables. Then there were rides every pleasant day, over cool, rolling country, and woods where one was as liable to find shells as flowers. There were wide, flat fields of grain, above which the moon sailed at night; each spot had its attraction, but the beach was the place where Jewel found the greatest joy; and while Mr. Evringham, in the course of his life, had taken part to the full in the social activities of a summer resort where men are usually scarce and proportionately prized, it can be safely said that he now set out upon the most strenuous vacation of his entire career.

It was his habit in moments of excitement or especial impressiveness to address his daughter-in-law as "madam," and on the second morning after their arrival, as she was sitting on the sand, viewing the great bottle-green rollers that marched unendingly landward, she noticed her father-in-law and Jewel engaged in

deep discussion, where they stood, between her and the water.

Mr. Evringham had just come to the beach, and the incessant noise of the waves made eavesdropping impossible; but his gestures and Jewel's replies roused her curiosity. The child's bathing-suit was dripping, and her pink toes were submerged by the rising tide, when her grandfather seized her hand and led her back to where her mother was sitting.

"Madam," he said, "this child must n't overdo this business. She tells me she has been splashing about for some time, already."

"And I 'm not a bit cold, mother," declared Jewel.

"H'm. Her hands are like frogs' paws, madam. I can see she is a perfect water-baby and will want to be in the waves continually. She says you are perfectly willing. Then it is because you are ignorant. She should go in once a day, madam, once a day."

"Oh, grandpa!" protested Jewel, "not even wade?"

"We 'll speak of that later; but put on your bathing-suit once a day only."

Mr. Evringham looked down at the glowing face seriously. Jewel lifted her wet shoulders and returned his look.

"Put it on in the morning, then, and keep it on all day?" she suggested, smiling.

"At the proper hour," he went on, "the bathing master is here. Then you will go in, and your mother, I hope."

"And you, too, grandpa?"

"Yes, and I 'll teach you to jump the waves. I

taught your father in this very place when he was your age."

"Oh, goody!" Jewel jumped up and down on the warm sand. "What fun it must have been to be your little boy!" she added.

Mr. Evringham refrained from looking at his daughter-in-law. He suspected that she knew better.

"Look at all this white sand," he said. "This was put here for babies like you to play with. Old ocean is too big a comrade for you."

"I just love the foam," returned the child wistfully, "and, oh, grandpa," eagerly, "I tasted of it and it 's as *salt!*"

Mr. Evringham smiled, looking at his daughter.

"Yes," said Julia. "Jewel has gone into Lake Michigan once or twice, and I think she was very much surprised to find that the Atlantic did not taste the same."

"Sit down here," said Mr. Evringham, "and I 'll show you what your father used to like to do twenty-five years ago."

Jewel sat down, with much interest, and watched the speaker scoop out a shallow place in the sand and make a ring about it.

"There, do you see these little hoppers?"

Julia was looking on, also. "Are n't they cunning, Jewel?" she exclaimed. "Exactly like tiny lobsters."

"Only they 're white instead of red," replied the child, and her grandfather smiled and caught one of the semi-transparent creatures.

"Lobsters are green when they 're at home," he said. "It 's only in our homes that they turn red."

"Really?"

"Yes. There are a number of things you have to learn, Jewel. The ocean is a splendid playmate, but rough. That is one of the things for you to remember."

"But I can wade, can't I? I want to build so many things that the water runs up into."

"Certainly, you can take off your shoes and stockings when it 's warm enough, as it is this morning, if your mother is willing you should drabble your skirts; but keep your dress on and then you won't forget yourself."

Jewel leaned toward the speaker affectionately. "Grandpa, you know I 'm a pretty big girl. I 'll be nine the first of September."

"Yes, I know that."

"Beside, you 're going to be with me all the time," she went on.

"H'm. Well, now see these sand-fleas race."

"Oh, are they sand-fleas? Just wait for Anna Belle." The child reached over to where the doll was gazing, fascinated, at the advancing, roaring breakers.

Her boa and plumed hat had evidently been put away from the moths. She wore a most becoming bathing costume of blue and white, and a coquettish silk handkerchief was knotted around her head. It was evident that, in common with some other summer girls, she did not intend to wet her fetching bathing-suit, and certainly it would be a risk to go into the water wearing the necklace that now sparkled in the summer sun.

"Come here, dearie, and see the baby lobsters," said Jewel, holding her child carefully away from her own glistening wetness, and seating her against Mrs. Evringham's knee.

"If lobsters could hop like this," said Mr. Evringham, "they would be shooting out of the ocean like dolphins. Now you choose one, Jewel, and we 'll see which wins the race. We 're going to place them in the middle of the ring, and watch which hops first outside the circle."

Jewel chuckled gleefully as she caught one. "Oh, mother, are n't his eyes funny! He looks as *surprised* all the time. Now hop, dearie," she added, as she placed him beside the one Mr. Evringham had set down. "Which do you guess, Anna Belle? She guesses grandpa's will beat."

"Well, I guess yours, Jewel," said her mother; but scarcely were the words spoken when Anna Belle's prophecy was proved correct by the airy bound with which one of the fleas cleared the barrier while Jewel's choice still remained transfixed. They all laughed except Anna Belle, who only smiled complacently.

Jewel leaned over her staring protégée. "If I only knew *what* you were so surprised at, dearie, I 'd explain it to you," she said. Then she gently pushed the creature, and it sped, tardily, over the border.

They pursued this game until the bathing-suit was dry; then Mr. Evringham yawned. "Ah, this bright air makes me sleepy. Have n't you something you can read to us, Julia?"

"Yes, yes," cried Jewel, "she brought the story-book."

"But I did n't realize it would be so noisy. I could never read aloud against this roaring."

"Oh, we 'll go back among the dunes. That 's easy," returned Mr. Evringham.

"You don't want to hear one of these little tales, father," said Julia, flushing.

"Why, he just loves them," replied Jewel earnestly. "I 've told them all to him, and he 's just as *interested*."

Mrs. Evringham did not doubt this, and she and the broker exchanged a look of understanding, but he smiled.

"I 'll be very good if you 'll let me come," he said. "I forgot the ribbon bows, but perhaps you 'd let me qualify by holding Anna Belle. Run and get into your clothes, Jewel, and I 'll find a nice place by that dune over yonder."

Fifteen minutes afterward the little party were comfortably ensconced in the shade of the sand hill whose sparse grasses grew tall about them.

Jewel began pulling on them. "You 'll never pull those up," remarked Mr. Evringham. "I believe their roots go down to China. I 've heard so."

"Anna Belle and I will dig sometime and see," replied Jewel, much interested.

"There are only two stories left," said Mrs. Evringham, who was running over the pages of the book.

"And let grandpa choose, won't you?" said Jewel.

"Oh, yes," and the somewhat embarrassed author read the remaining titles.

"I choose Robinson Crusoe, of course," announced Mr. Evringham. "This is an appropriate place to read that. I dare say by stretching our necks a little we could see his island."

"Well, this story is a true one," said Julia. "It happened to the children of some friends of mine, who

live about fifty miles from Chicago." Then she began to read as follows: —

ROBINSON CRUSOE

"I guess I shall like Robinson Crusoe, mamma!" exclaimed Johnnie Ford, rushing into his mother's room after school one day.

"You would be an odd kind of boy if you did not," replied Mrs. Ford, "and yet you did n't seem much pleased when your father gave you the book on your birthday."

"Well, I did n't care much about it then, but Fred King says it is the best story that ever was, and he ought to know; he rides to school in an automobile. Say, when 'll you read it to me? Do it now, won't you?"

"If what?" corrected Mrs. Ford.

"Oh, if you please. You know I always mean it."

"No, dear, I don't think I will. A boy nine years old ought to be able to read Robinson Crusoe for himself."

Johnnie looked startled, and stood on one leg while he twisted the other around it.

"If you have a pleasant object to work for, it will make it so much the easier to study," continued Mrs. Ford, as she handed Johnnie the blue book with a gold picture pressed into its side.

Johnnie pouted and looked very cross. "It 's a regular old trap," he said.

"Yes, dear, a trap to catch a student;" and pretty Mrs. Ford's low laugh was so contagious that Johnnie marched out of the room, fearing he might smile in sympathy; but he soon found that leaving the room was not

escaping from the fascinating Crusoe. Up to this time Johnnie had never taken much interest in school-books beyond scribbling on their blank margins. Was it really worth while, he wondered, "to buckle down" and learn to read? He knew just enough about the famous Crusoe to make him wish to learn more, so he finally decided that it was worth while, if only to impress Chips Wood, his next-door neighbor and playmate, a boy a year younger than himself, whom Johnnie patronized out of school hours. So he worked away until at last there came a proud day when he carried the blue and gold wonder book into Chips' yard, and, seated beside his friend on the piazza step, began to read aloud the story of Robinson Crusoe. It would be hard to tell which pair of eyes grew widest and roundest as the tale unfolded, and when Johnnie, one day, laid the book down, finished, two sighs of admiration floated away over Mrs. Wood's crocus bed.

"Chips, I 'd rather be Robinson Crusoe than a king!" exclaimed Johnnie.

"So would I," responded Chips. "Let 's play it."

"But we can't both be Crusoes. Would n't you like to be Friday?" asked Johnnie insinuatingly, "he was so nice and black."

"Ye-yes," hesitated Chips, who had great confidence in Johnnie's judgment, but whose fancy had been taken by the high cap and leggings in the golden picture.

"Then I 've got a plan," and Johnnie leaned toward his friend's ear and whispered something under cover of his hand, that opened the younger boy's eyes wider than ever.

"Now you must n't tell," added Johnnie aloud, "'cause that would n't be like men a bit. Promise not to, deed and double!"

"Deed and double!" echoed Chips solemnly, for that was a very binding expression between him and Johnnie.

For several days following this, Mrs. Wood and Mrs. Ford were besieged by the boys to permit them to earn money; and Mrs. Ford, especially, was astonished at the way Johnnie worked at clearing up the yard, and such other jobs as were not beyond his strength; but, inquire as she might into the motive of all this labor, she could only discover that Chips and Johnnie wished to buy a hen.

"Have you asked father if you might keep hens?" she inquired of Johnnie, but he only shook his head mysteriously.

Chips' mother found him equally uncommunicative. She would stand at her window which overlooked the Fords' back yard, and watch the boys throw kindling into the shed, or sweep the paths, and wonder greatly in her own mind. "Bless their little hearts, what can it all be about?" she questioned, but she could not get at the truth.

Suddenly the children ceased asking for jobs, and announced that they had all the money they cared for. The day after this announcement was the first of April. When Mr. Ford came home to dinner that day, he missed Johnnie.

"I suppose some of his schoolmates have persuaded him to stay and share their lunch," explained Mrs. Ford.

She had scarcely finished speaking when Mrs. Wood came in, inquiring for Chips. "I have not seen him for two hours," she said, "and I cannot help feeling a little anxious, for the children have behaved so queerly lately."

"I know," returned Mrs. Ford, beginning to look worried. "Why, do you know, Johnnie did n't play a trick on one of us this morning. I actually had to remind him that it was April Fools' Day."

Mr. Ford laughed. "How woe-begone you both look! I think there is a very simple explanation of the boys' absence. Chips probably went to school to meet Johnnie, who has persuaded him to stay during the play hour. I will drive around there on my way to business and send Chips home."

The mothers welcomed this idea warmly; and in a short time Mr. Ford set out, but upon reaching the school was met with the word that Johnnie had not been seen there at all that morning. Then it was his turn to look anxious. He drove about, questioning every one, until he finally obtained a clue at the meat market where he dealt.

"Your little boy was in here this morning about half past ten, after a ham. He would n't have it charged; said 't was for himself," said the market-man, laughing at the remembrance. "He did n't have quite enough money to pay for it, but I told him I guessed that would be all right, and off they went, him and the little Wood boy, luggin' that ham most as big as they was."

"Then they were together. Which way did they go?"

"Straight south, I know, 'cause I went to the door and watched 'em. You have n't lost 'em, have you?"

"I hope not," and Mr. Ford sprang into his buggy, and drove off in the direction indicated, occasionally stopping to inquire if the children had been seen. To his great satisfaction he found it easy to trace them, thanks to the ham; and a little beyond the outskirts of the town he saw a promising speck ahead of him on the flat, white road. As he drew nearer, the speck widened and heightened into two little boys trudging along before him. His heart gave a thankful bound at sight of the dear little legs in their black stockings and knee breeches, and leaving his buggy by the side of the road, he walked rapidly forward and caught up with the boys, who turned and faced him as he approached. Displeased as he was, Mr. Ford could hardly resist a hearty laugh at the comical appearance of the runaways. Chips carried the big, heavy ham, and Johnnie was keeping firm hold of a hen, who stretched her neck and looked very uncomfortable in her quarters under his arm.

"Why, father!" exclaimed Johnnie, recovering from a short tussle with the poor hen, "how funny that you should be here."

"No stranger than that you should be here, I think. Where, if I have any right to ask, are you going?"

"To Lake Michigan," replied Johnnie composedly. "Oh, I do wish this old hen would keep still!"

"Then you have fifty miles before you," said Mr. Ford.

"Yes, sir," replied Johnnie, "but it would have been a thousand miles to the ocean, you know."

TRUDGING ALONG BEFORE HIM

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mr. Ford, mystified, but unable to control himself any longer at sight of Johnnie and the hen, and patient-faced Chips clutching the ham.

"I am glad you don't mind, father," said Johnnie. "I thought it would be so nice for you and mother and Mrs. Wood not to have Chips and me to worry about any more."

"It was very thoughtful of you," replied Mr. Ford, remembering the anxious faces at home. "And what are you going to do at Lake Michigan?"

"Take a boat and go away and get wrecked on a desert island, like Robinson Crusoe," responded Johnnie glibly, at the same time hitching the hen up higher under his arm.

"And how about Chips?"

"Oh, I 'm Man Friday," chirped Chips, his poor little face quite black enough for the character.

"I am so sorry we had to tell you so soon," said Johnnie. "We were keeping it a secret until we got to the lake; then we were going to send you a letter."

Mr. Ford looked gravely into his son's grimy face. It was an honest face, and Johnnie had always been a truthful boy, and just now seemed only troubled by the restless behavior of his hen; so the father rightly concluded that the blue and gold book had captivated him into the belief that what he and Chips were doing was admirable and heroic.

"What part is the hen going to play?" asked the gentleman. "Is she going to help stock your island?"

"Oh, no, but we could n't get along without her, because she 's going to lay eggs along the way."

"Lay eggs?"

"Yes, for our lunch. At first we were n't going to take anything but the hen, but Chips said he liked ham and eggs better 'n anything, so we decided to take it."

Another pause; then Mr. Ford said: "You both look tired, have n't you had enough of it? I 'm going home now."

"No, no," asserted the boys.

"And have you thought of your mothers, whom you did n't even kiss good-by?"

Johnnie stood on one leg and twisted the other foot around it, after his manner when troubled.

"I thought you knew, Johnnie, that nothing ever turns out right when you undertake it without first consulting mother."

"I wish now I 'd kissed mine good-by," observed Friday thoughtfully.

"Come, we 'll go back together," said Mr. Ford quietly, moving off as he spoke, "and we will see what Mrs. Wood and mother have to say on the subject."

Johnnie and Chips followed slowly. "Father," said the former emphatically, "I can't be happy without being wrecked, and I do hope mother won't object."

His father made no reply to this, and three quarters of an hour afterward the children jumped out of the buggy into their mothers' arms, and as they still clung to their lunch, the ham and the hen came in for a share of the embracing, which the hen objected to seriously, never having been hugged before this eventful day.

"Never mind, mother," said Johnnie patronizingly, "father 'll tell you all about it while I go and put Speckle in a safe place." So the boys went, and Mr.

Ford seated himself in an armchair, and related the events of the afternoon to the ladies, adding some advice as to the manner of making the boys see the folly of their undertaking.

Mrs. Wood and Chips took tea at the Fords' that evening, and the boys, once delivered from the necessity of keeping their secret, rattled on incessantly of their plans; talked so much and so fast, in fact, that their parents were not obliged to say anything, which was a great convenience, as they had nothing they wished to say just then. It had been a mild first of April, and after supper the little company sat out on the piazza for a time.

"As Johnnie and Chips will be obliged to spend so many nights out of doors on their way to Lake Michigan, it will be an excellent plan to begin immediately," said Mr. Ford. "You 'll like to spend the night out here, of course, boys. To be sure, it will be a good deal more comfortable than the road, still you can judge by it how such a life will suit you."

Johnnie looked at Chips and Chips looked at Johnnie; for the exertions of the day had served to make the thought of their white beds very inviting; but Mr. Ford and the ladies talked on different subjects, and took no notice of them. At last the evening air grew uncomfortably cool, and the grown people rose to go in.

"Good-night, all," said Mrs. Wood, starting for home.

Chips watched her down to the gate. "Aren't you going to kiss me good-night?" he called.

"Of course, if you want me to," she answered, turn-

ing back, "but you went away this morning without kissing me, you know." Then she kissed him and went away; and in all his eight years of life little Man Friday had never felt so forlorn. Johnnie held up his lips sturdily to bid his father and mother good-night.

"I think we are going to have a thunder-storm, unseasonable as it will be," remarked Mr. Ford pleasantly, standing in the doorway. "Well, I suppose you won't mind it. Good luck to you, boys!" then the heavy front door closed.

Johnnie had never before realized what a clang it made when it was shut. The key turned with a squeaking noise, a bolt was pushed with a solid thud; all the windows came banging down, their locks were made fast, and Johnnie and Chips felt literally, figuratively, and every other way left out in the cold.

There was an uncomfortable silence for a minute; then Chips spoke.

"Your house is splendid and safe, is n't it, Johnnie?"

"Yes, it is."

"I wonder where we 'd better lie down," pursued Chips. "I 'm sleepy. Let 's play we 're Crusoe and Friday now."

"Oh, we can't," responded Johnnie impatiently, "not with so many com —" he was going to say comforts, but changed his mind.

The night was very dark, not a twinkling star peeped down at the children, and the naked branches of the climbing roses rattled against the pillars to which they were nailed, for the wind was rising.

The boys sat down on the steps and Chips edged closer to his companion. "I think it was queer actions

in my mother," he said, "to leave me here without any shawl or pillow or anything."

A little chill crept over Johnnie's head from sleepiness and cold. "Our mothers don't care what happens to us," he replied gloomily. The stillness of the house and the growing lateness of the hour combined to make him feel that if being wrecked was more uncomfortable than this, he could, after all, be happy without it.

"What do you think?" broke in the shivering Man Friday. "Mamma says ham is n't good to eat if it is n't cooked."

"And that 's the meanest old hen that ever lived!" returned Crusoe. "She has n't laid an egg since I got her."

A distant rumble sounded in the air. "What 's that?" asked Chips.

"Well, I should think you 'd know that 's thunder," replied Johnnie crossly.

"Oh, yes," said little Chips meekly, "and we 're going to get wet."

They were both quiet for another minute, while the wind rose and swept by them.

"I really think, Johnnie," began Chips apologetically, "that I 'm not big enough to be a good Man Friday. I think to-morrow you 'd better find somebody else."

"No, indeed," replied Johnnie feelingly. "I 'd rather give up being wrecked than go off with any one but you. If you give up, I shall."

The rain began to patter down.

"If you don't like to get wet, Chips, I 'd just as lieves go and ring the bell as not," he added.

A sudden sweep of wind nearly tipped the children over, for they had risen, undecidedly.

"No," called Chips stoutly, to be heard above the blast. "I 'll be Friday till to-morrow." His last word sounded like a shout, for the wind suddenly died.

"What do you scream so for?" asked Johnnie impatiently; but the storm had only paused, as it were, to get ready, and now approached swiftly, gathering strength as it came. It swept across the piazza, taking the children's breath away and bending the tall maple in front of the house with such sudden fury that a branch snapped off; then the wind died in the distance with a rushing sound and the breaking tree was illumined by a flash of lightning.

"I think, Johnnie," said Chips unsteadily, "that God wants us to go in the house."

A peal of thunder roared. "I 've just thought," replied Johnnie, keeping his balance by clutching the younger boy as tightly as Chips was clinging to him, "that perhaps it was n't right for us to run off the way we did, without getting any advice."

They strove with the wind only a few seconds more, then, with one accord, struggled to the door where one rang peal after peal at the bell, while the other pounded sturdily.

Johnnie did n't stop then to wonder how his father could get downstairs to open the door so quickly. Mrs. Ford, too, seemed to have been waiting for the pair of heroes, and she took them straight to Johnnie's room, where she undressed them in silence and rolled them into bed. They said their prayers and were asleep in two minutes, while the storm howled outside. Then, in

some mysterious way, Mrs. Wood came into the room, and the three parents stood watching the unconscious children.

"That 's the last of one trial with those boys, I 'm sure," said Mr. Ford, laughing, and he was right; for it was years before any one heard either Johnnie or Chips mention Robinson Crusoe or his Man Friday.

CHAPTER XV

ST. VALENTINE

After that day when, on the lee side of the sand-dune, the Evringham family read together the story of Johnnie and Chips, it was some time before the last tale in the story book was called for.

The farmhouse where they boarded stood near a pond formed by the rushing in of the sea during some change in the sands of the beach, so here was still another water playmate for Jewel.

"I do hope," said Mr. Evringham meditatively, on the first morning that he and Jewel stood together on its green bank, "I do hope that very particular housekeeper, Nature, will let this pond alone until we go!"

Jewel looked up at his serious face with the lines between the eyes. "She would n't touch this great big pond, would she?" she asked.

"Ho! Would n't she? Well, I guess so."

"But," suggested Jewel, lifting her shoulders, "she 's too busy in summer in the ravines and everywhere."

"Oh," Mr. Evringham nodded his head knowingly. "Nature looks out for everything."

"Grandpa!" Jewel's eyes were intent. "Would she ask Summer to touch this great big pond? What would she want to do it for?"

"Oh, more house-cleaning, I suppose."

The child chuckled as she looked out across the blue

waves, rippling in the wind and white-capped here and there. "When you know it 's washed all the *time*, grandpa," she responded. "The waves are just scrubbing it now. Can't you see?"

"Yes," the broker nodded gravely. "No doubt that is why she has to empty it so seldom. Sometimes she lets it go a very long time; but then the day comes when she begins to think it over, and to calculate how much sediment and one thing and another there is in the bottom of that pond; and at last she says, 'Come now, out it must go!'"

"But how can she get it out, how?" asked Jewel keenly interested. "The brooks are all running somewhere, but the pond does n't. How can she dip it out? It would take Summer's hottest sun a year!"

"Yes, indeed, Nature is too clever to try that. The winds are her servants, you know, and they understand their business perfectly; so when she says 'That pond needs to be cleaned out,' they merely get up a storm some night after everybody 's gone to bed. The people have seen the pond fine and full when the sun went down. All that night the wind howls and the windows rattle and the trees bend and switch around; and if those in the farmhouse, instead of being in bed, were over there on the beach," the speaker waved his hand toward the shining white sand, distant, but in plain sight, "they might see countless billows working for dear life to dig a trench through the hard sand. The wind sends one tremendous wave after another to help them, and as a great roller breaks and recedes, all the little crested waves scrabble with might and main, pulling at the softened sand, until, after hours of this

labor, the cut is made completely through from sea to pond."

Mr. Evringham looked down and met the unwinking gaze fixed upon him. "Then why — why," asked Jewel, "when the big rollers keep coming, does n't the pond get filled fuller than ever?"

The broker lifted his forefinger toward his face with a long drawn "Ah-h! Nature is much too clever for *that*. She may not have gone to college, but she understands engineering, all the same. All this is accomplished just at the right moment for the outgoing tide to pull at the pond with a mighty hand. Well," — pausing dramatically, — "you can imagine what happens when the deep cut is finished."

"Does the pond have to go, grandpa?"

"It just does, and in a hurry!"

"Is it sorry, do you think?" asked Jewel doubtfully.

"We-ell, I don't know that I ever thought of that side of it; but you can imagine the feelings of the people in the farmhouse, who went to bed beside the ripples of a smiling little lake, and woke to find themselves near a great empty bog."

Jewel thought and sighed deeply. "Well," she said, at last, "I hope Nature will wait till we 're gone. I love this pond."

"Indeed I hope so, too. There would n't be any pleasant side to it."

Jewel's thoughtful face brightened. "Except for the little fishes and water-creatures that would rush out to sea. It 's fun for *them*. Must n't they be surprised when that happens, grandpa?"

"I should think so! Do you suppose the wind gives them any warning, or any time to pack?"

Jewel laughed. "I don't know; but just think of rushing out into those great breakers, when you don't expect it, right from living so quietly in the pond!"

"H'm. A good deal like going straight from Bel-Air Park to Wall Street, I should think."

Jewel grew serious. "I think fish have the most *fun*," she said. "Do you know, grandpa, I've decided that if I could n't be your little grandchild, I'd rather be a lobster than anything."

The broker threw up his head, laughing. "Some children could combine the two," he replied, "but you can't."

"What?" asked Jewel.

"Nothing. Why not be a fish, Jewel? They 're much more graceful."

"But they can't creep around among the coral and peek into oyster shells at the pearls."

"Imagine a lobster peeking!" Mr. Evringham strained his eyes to their widest and stared at Jewel, who shouted.

"That 's just the way the sand-fleas look," she exclaimed.

"Well," remarked the broker, recovering his ordinary expression, "you may as well remain a little girl, so far as that goes. You can creep around among the coral and peek at pearls at Tiffany's."

"What 's Tiffany's?"

"Something you will take more interest in when you 're older." The broker shook his head. "The difference is that the lobster would n't care to wear the

coral and pearls. An awful thought comes over me once in a while, Jewel," he added, after a pause.

The child looked up at him seriously. "It can be met," she answered quickly.

He smiled. He understood her peculiar expressions in these days. "Hardly, I think," he answered. "It is this: that you are going to grow up."

Jewel looked off at the blue water. "Well," she replied at last hopefully, "you 're grown up, you know, and perhaps you 'll like me then just as much as I do you."

He squeezed the little hand he held. "We 'll hope so," he said.

"And besides, grandpa," she went on, for she had heard him express the same dread before, "we 'll be together every day, so perhaps you won't notice it. Sometimes I 've tried to see a flower open. I 've known it was going to do it, and I 've been just *bound* I 'd see it; and I 've watched and watched, but I never could see when the leaves spread, no matter how much I tried, and yet it would get to be a rose, somehow. Perhaps some day somebody 'll say to you, 'Why, Jewel 's a grown up lady, is n't she?' and you 'll say, 'Is she, really? Why, I had n't noticed it.'"

"That 's a comforting idea," returned Mr. Evringham briefly, his eyes resting on the upturned face.

"So now, if the pond won't run away, we 'll have the most *fun*," went on Jewel, relieved. "They *said* we could take this boat, grandpa, and have a row." She lifted her shoulders and smiled.

"H'm. A row and a swim combined," returned the broker. "I 'm surprised they 've nothing better this

year than that ramshackle boat. You 'll have to bail if we go."

"What 's bail?" eagerly.

"Dipping out the water with a tin cup."

"Oh, that 'll be fun. It 'll be an adventure, grandpa, won't it?"

"I hope not," earnestly, was the reply; but Jewel was already sitting on the grass pulling off her shoes and stockings. She leaped nimbly into the wet boat, and Mr. Evringham stepped gingerly after her, seeking for dry spots for his canvas shoes.

"I think," said the child joyfully, as they pushed off, "when the winds and waves notice us having so much fun, they 'll let the pond alone, don't you?"

"If they have any hearts at all," responded Mr. Evringham, bending to the oars.

"Oh, grandpa, you can tell stories like anything!" exclaimed Jewel admiringly.

"It has been said before," rejoined the broker modestly.

When outdoor gayeties had to be dispensed with one day, on account of a thorough downpour of rain, the last story in Jewel's book was called for.

The little circle gathered in the big living-room; there was no question now as to whether Mr. Evringham should be present.

"It is Hobson's choice this time," said Mrs. Evringham, "so we 'll all choose the story, won't we?"

"Let Anna Belle have the turn, though," replied Jewel. "She chose the first one and she must have the last, because she does n't have so much fun as the rest

of us." She hugged the doll and kissed her cheeks comfortingly. It was too true that often of late Anna Belle did not accompany all the excursions, but she went to bed with Jewel every night, and it was seldom that the child was too sleepy to take her into full confidence concerning the events of the day; and Anna Belle, being of a sedentary turn and given to day dreams, was apparently quite as well pleased.

Now Mr. Evringham settled in a big easy-chair; the reader took a small one by the window, and Jewel sat on the rug before the fire, holding Anna Belle.

"Now we 're off," said Mr. Evringham.

"Go to sleep if you like, father," remarked the author, smiling, and then she began to read the story entitled

ST. VALENTINE

There was a little buzz of interest in Miss Joslyn's room in the public school, one day in February, over the arrival of a new scholar. Only a very little buzz, because the new-comer was a plain little girl as to face and dress, with big, wondering eyes, and a high-necked and long-sleeved gingham apron.

"Take this seat, Alma," said Miss Joslyn; and the little girl obeyed, while Ada Singer, the scholar directly behind her, nudged her friend, Lucy Berry, and mimicked the stranger's surprised way of looking around the room.

The first day in a new school is an ordeal to most children, but Alma felt no fear or strangeness, and gazed about her, well pleased with her novel surroundings, and her innocent pleasure was a source of great amusement to Ada.

"Is n't she queer-looking?" she asked of Lucy, as at noon they perched on the window-sill in the dressing-room, where they always ate their lunch together.

"Yes, she has such big eyes," assented Lucy. "Who is she?"

"Why, her mother has just come to work in my father's factory. Her father is dead, or in prison, or something."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed a voice, and looking down from their elevated seat the girls saw Alma Driscoll, a big tin dinner-pail in her hand, and her cheeks flushing. "My father went away because he was discouraged, but he is coming back."

Ada shrugged her shoulders and took a bite of jelly-cake. "What a delicate appetite you must have," she said, winking at Lucy and looking at the big pail.

"Oh, it is n't full; the things don't fit very well," replied Alma, taking off the cover and disclosing a little lunch at the bottom; "but it was all the pail we had." Then she sat down on the floor of the dressing-room and took out a piece of bread and butter.

"Well, upon my word, if that is n't cool!" exclaimed Ada, staring at the brown gingham figure.

Alma looked up mildly. She had come to the dressing-room on purpose to eat her lunch where she could look at Lucy Berry, who seemed beautiful to Alma, with her brown eyes, red cheeks, and soft cashmere dress, and it never occurred to her that she could be in the way.

Ada turned to Lucy with a curling lip. "I should hate to be a third party, should n't you?" she asked, so significantly that even Alma could n't help understand-

ing her. Tears started to the big eyes as the little girl dropped her bread back into the hollow depths of the pail, replaced the cover, and went away to find a solitary corner, with a sorer spot in her heart than she had ever known.

"Oh, why did you say that, Ada?" exclaimed Lucy, making a movement as if to slip down from the window-seat and follow.

"Don't you go one step after her, Lucy Berry," commanded Ada. "My mother does n't want me to associate with the children of the factory people. She 'll find plenty of friends of her own kind."

"But you hurt her feelings," protested Lucy.

"Oh, no, I did n't," carelessly; "besides, if I did, she 'll forget all about it. I had to let her know that she could n't stay with us. Do you want a stranger like that to hear everything we 're saying?"

"I feel as if I ought to go and find her and see if she has somebody to eat with."

"Very well, Lucy. If you go with her, I can't go with you, that 's all. You can take your choice."

The final tone in Ada's voice destroyed Lucy's courage. The little girls were very fond of one another, and Lucy was entirely under strong-willed Ada's influence.

Ada was a most attractive little person. Her father, the owner of the factory, was the richest man in town; and to play on Ada's wonderful piano, where you had only to push with your feet to play the gayest music, or to ride with her in her automobile, were exciting joys to her friends. She always had money in her pocket, and boxes of candy for the entertainment of other children, and Lucy was proud of her own position

as Ada's intimate friend. So when it came to making a choice between this brilliant companion and the gingham-clad daughter of a factory hand, Lucy Berry's courage and sympathy oozed away, and she sat back on the window-seat, while Ada began talking about something else.

This first school-day was Alma Driscoll's introduction into the world outside of her mother's love. She had never felt so lonely as when surrounded by all these girls, each of whom had her intimate friend, and among whom she was not wanted. She could not help feeling that she was different from the others, and day by day the wondering eyes grew shy and lonely; and she avoided the children out of school hours, bravely hiding from her mother that the gingham apron, which always hid her faded dress, seemed to her a badge of disgrace that separated her from her daintily dressed schoolmates.

Such was the state of affairs when St. Valentine's day dawned. Alma's two weeks of school had seemed a little eternity to her; but this day she could feel that there was something unusual in the air, and she could not help being affected by the pleasurable excitement afloat in the room. She knew what the big white box by the door was for, and when, after school, Miss Joslyn was appointed to uncover and distribute the valentines, Alma found herself following the crowd, until, pressed close to Lucy Berry's side, she stood in the centre of the merry group about the teacher.

While the dainty envelopes were being passed around her, a shade of wistfulness crept over the child's face, and her eager fingers crumpled the checked apron as

though Alma feared they might otherwise touch the beautiful valentines that shone so enticingly with red and blue, gold and silver. Suddenly Miss Joslyn spoke her name, — Alma Driscoll; only she said "Miss Alma Driscoll," and, yes, there was no mistake about it, she had read it off one of those vine-wreathed envelopes.

"Did you ever see such a goose!" exclaimed Ada Singer, as she watched the mixture of shyness and eagerness with which Alma took her valentine and opened the envelope.

Poor little Alma! How her heart beat as she unfolded her prize — and how it sank when she beheld the coarse, flaring picture of a sewing girl, with a disgusting rhyme printed beneath it. She dropped the valentine, a great sob of disappointment choked her, and bursting into tears, she pushed her way through the crowd and rushed from the schoolroom.

"What is the meaning of that?" asked Miss Joslyn.

For answer some one handed her the picture. The young lady glanced at it, then tore it in pieces as she looked sadly around on her scholars.

"Whoever sent this knows that Alma's mother works in the factory," she said. "It makes me ashamed of my whole school to think there is one child in it cruel enough to do this thing;" then, amid the silent consternation of the scholars, Miss Joslyn rose, and leaving the half-emptied box, went home without another word.

"What a fuss about nothing," said Ada Singer. "The idea of crying because you get a 'comic!' What else could Alma Driscoll expect?"

Lucy Berry's cheeks had been growing redder all through this scene, and now she turned upon Ada.

"She has a right to expect a great deal else," she returned excitedly, "but we 've all been so hateful to her it 's a wonder if she did. I wish I 'd been kind to her before," she continued, her heart aching with the remembrance of the little lonely figure, and the big, hollow dinner-pail; "but I 'm going to be her friend now, always, and you can be friends with us or not, just as you please;" and turning from the astonished Ada, Lucy Berry marched out of the schoolroom, fearing she should cry if she stayed, and sure that if there were any more beauties for her in the white box, her stanch friend, Frank Morse, would take care of them for her. Among the valentines she had already received was one addressed in his handwriting, and she looked at it as she walked along.

"It 's the handsomest one I ever saw," she thought, lifting a rose here, and a group of cupids there, and reading the tender messages thus disclosed.

"I know what I 'll do!" she exclaimed aloud. "I 'll send it to Alma. Frank won't care," and covering the valentine in its box, she started to run, and turned a corner at such speed that she bumped into somebody coming at equal or greater speed, from the opposite direction. A passer-by just then would have been amused to see a boy and girl sitting flat on the sidewalk, rubbing their heads and staring at one another.

"Lucy Berry!"

"Frank Morse!"

"What 's up?"

"Nothing. Something 's down, and it 's me."

"Well, excuse me; but I guess you have n't seen any more stars than I have. I don't care anything for the Fourth now, I 've seen enough fireworks to last me a year."

Both children laughed. "You 've got grit, Lucy," added Frank, jumping up and coming to help her. "Most girls would have boo-hooed over that."

"Oh, I would n't," returned the little girl, springing to her feet. "I 'm too excited."

"Well, what *is* up?" persisted Frank. "I skipped out of the side door to try to meet you."

"Well, you did," laughed Lucy. "Oh, Frank, I don't know how I can laugh," she pursued, sobering. "I don't deserve to, ever again."

"What is it? Something about that Driscoll kid? She was crying. I was back there and I did n't hear what Miss Joslyn said; but I saw her leave, and then you, and I thought *I* 'd go to the fire, too, if there was one."

"Oh, there is," returned Lucy, "right in here." She grasped the waist of her dress over where her heart was beating hard.

Frank Morse was older than herself and Ada, and she knew that he was one of the few of their friends whose good opinion Ada cared for. To enlist him on Alma's side would mean something.

"Is Ada still there?" she added.

"Yes, she took charge of the valentine box after Miss Joslyn left."

"Oh, Frank, do you suppose she could have sent Alma the 'comic'?" Genuine grief made Lucy's voice unsteady.

"Supposing she did," returned Frank stoutly. "Is that what Big-Eyes was crying about? I hate people to be touchy and blubber over a thing like that."

"You don't know. Her mother works in the factory, and this was a horrid picture making fun of it. Think of your own mother earning your living and being made fun of."

"Ada would n't do that," replied Frank shortly. "What made you think of such a thing?"

"It was error for me to say it," returned Lucy, with a meek groan. "I 've been doing error things ever since Alma came to school. Oh, Frank, you 're a Christian Scientist, too. You must help me to get things straight."

"You don't need to be a Christian Scientist to see that it was n't a square deal to send the kid that picture."

"No, I know it; but when Alma first came, Ada said her mother did n't allow her to go with girls from the factory, and so I stopped trying to be kind to Alma, because Ada would n't like me if I did; and it 's been such mesmerism, Frank."

The boy smiled. "Do you remember the stories your mother used to tell us about the work of the error-fairies?"

"Indeed I do. My head 's just been full of it the last fifteen minutes. I 've done nothing for two weeks but give the error-fairies backbones, and I don't care what happens to me, or how much I 'm punished, if I can only do right again."

"Who 's going to punish you?" asked Frank, not quite seeing the reason for so much feeling.

"Ada. We've always had so much fun, and now it's all over."

"Oh, I guess not. Ada Singer's all right."

Lucy did n't think so. She was convinced that her friend had done this last unkindness to Alma, and it was the shock of that discovery that was causing a portion of her suffering now.

Frank and Lucy talked for a few minutes longer, and it was agreed that the former should return to the school and get any other valentines that should be there for Lucy and himself; then, as soon as it grew dark, they would run to the Driscoll cottage with an offering.

Late that afternoon three mothers were called to interviews with three little girls. Lucy Berry surprised hers by rushing in where Mrs. Berry was seated, sewing.

"Oh!" exclaimed the little girl, "I'm so sorry all over, mother!"

"Then you must know why you can't be," returned Mrs. Berry, looking up at the flushed face and seeing something there that made her put aside her work.

Lucy usually considered herself too large to sit in her mother's lap, but now she did so, and flinging her arms around her neck, poured out the whole story.

"To think that Ada *could* send it!" finished Lucy, with one big sob.

"Be careful, be careful. You don't know that she did," replied Mrs. Berry. "'Thou shalt not bear false witness.'"

"Oh, I do *hope* she did n't," responded Lucy, "but

Ada is stuck up. I 've been seeing it more and more lately."

"And how about the beam in my little girl's own eye?" asked Mrs. Berry gently.

"Have n't I been telling you all about it? I 've been just as selfish and cowardly as I could be." Lucy's voice was despairing.

"I think there 's a beam there still. I think you are angry with Ada."

"How can I help it? If it had n't been for her I should n't have been so mean."

"Oh, Lucy dear!" Mrs. Berry smiled over the head on her shoulder. "There is old Adam again, blaming somebody else for his fall. Have you forgotten that there is only one person you have the right to work with and change?"

"I don't care," replied Lucy hotly. "I 've been calling evil good. I have. I 've been calling Ada good and sticking to her and letting her run me."

"Was it because of what you could get from her, or because of what you could do for her?" asked Mrs. Berry quietly.

Lucy was silent a minute, then she spoke: "She wanted me. She liked me better than anybody."

"Well, now you see what selfish attachments can turn into," returned Mrs. Berry. "Do you remember the teaching about the worthlessness of mortal mind love? Here are you and Ada, yesterday thinking you love one another, and to-day at enmity."

"I 'm going with Alma Driscoll now, and I 'm going to eat my lunch with her, and everything. I should think that was unselfish."

"Perhaps it will be. We 'll see. Is n't it a little comfort to you to think that it will be some punishment to Ada to see you do it?"

"I don't know," replied Lucy, who was so honest that she hesitated.

"Well, then, think until you do know, and be very certain whether the thoughts that are stirring you so are all loving. You see, dearie, we 're all so tempted, in times of excitement, to begin at the wrong end: tempted to begin with ourselves instead of with God. The all-loving Creator of you and Ada and Alma has made three dear children, one just as precious to Him as another. If the loveliness of His creation is hidden by something discordant, then we must work away at it; and one's own consciousness is the place where she has a right to work, and that helps all. It says in the Bible 'When He giveth quietness who then can make trouble?' You can rest yourself with the thought of His great quietness now, and you will reflect it."

Mrs. Berry paused and her rocking-chair swayed softly back and forth during a moment of silence.

"You know enough about Science," she went on, at last, "to be certain that weeks of an offended manner with Ada would have no effect except to make he long to punish you. You know that love is reflected in love, and that its opposite is just as certain to be reflected unless one knows God's truth."

"But you don't say anything at all about Alma," said Lucy. "She 's the chief one."

Mrs. Berry smiled. "No," she returned gently. "You are the chief one. Just as soon as your thought is surely right, don't you know that your heavenly

Father is going to show you how to unravel this little snarl? You remember there is n't any personality to error, whether it tries to fasten on Ada, or on you."

Lucy sat upright. Her cheeks were still flushed, but her eyes had lost their excited light. "Frank Morse and I are going to take some pretty valentines to Alma's as soon as it is dark," she said.

"That will be pleasant. Now let us read over the lesson for to-day again, and know what a joyous thing life is."

"Well, mother, will you go and see Mrs. Driscoll some time?"

"Certainly I will, Sunday. I suppose she is too busy to see me other days."

In the Singer house another excited child had rushed home from school and sought and found her mother.

Mrs. Singer had just reached a most interesting spot in the novel she was reading, when Ada startled her by running into the room and slamming the door behind her.

"Mother, you know you don't want me to go with the factory people," she cried.

"Of course not. What 's the matter?" returned Mrs. Singer briefly, keeping her finger between the leaves of her half-closed book.

"Why, Lucy Berry is angry with me, and I don't care. I shall never go with her again!"

"Dear me, Ada. I should think you could settle these little differences without bothering me. What has the factory to do with it?"

"Why, there is a new girl at school, Alma Driscoll, and her mother works there; and she tried to come

with Lucy and me, and Lucy would have let her, but I told her you would n't like it, and, anyway, of course we did n't want her. So to-day when the valentine box was opened, Alma Driscoll got a 'comic;' and she could n't take a joke and cried and went home. I can't bear a cry-baby, anyway. And then Miss Joslyn made a fuss about it and *she* went home, and after that Lucy Berry flared up at me and said she was going to be friends with Alma after this, and *she* went home. It just spoiled everybody's fun to have them act so silly. Lucy got Frank Morse to bring out all his valentines and hers. I 'll never go with her again, whether she goes with Alma or not!"

Angry little sparks were shining in Ada's eyes, and she evidently made great effort not to cry.

"What was this comic valentine that made so much trouble?"

"Oh, something about a factory girl. You know the verses are always silly on those."

"Well, it was n't very nice to send it to her before all the children, I must say. Who do you suppose did it?"

"No one ever tells who sends valentines," returned Ada defiantly. "No one will ever know."

"Well, if the foolish child, whoever it was, only had known, she was n't so smart or so unkind as she thought she was. Mrs. Driscoll is n't an ordinary factory hand. She is an assistant in the bookkeeping department."

"Well, they must be awfully poor, the way Alma looks, anyway," returned Ada.

"I suppose they are poor. I happened to hear Mr. Knapp begging your father to let a Mrs. Driscoll have

that position, and your father finally consented. I remember his telling how long the husband had been away trying for work, and what worthy people they were, old friends of his. They lived in some neighboring town; so when Mrs. Driscoll was offered this position they came here. They live" —

"Oh, I know where they live," interrupted Ada, "and I knew they were factory people anyway, and you would n't want me going with girls like Alma."

"I 'd want you to be kind to her, of course," returned Mrs. Singer.

"Then she 'd have stuck to us if I had been. I guess you 've forgotten the way it is at school."

Mrs. Singer sighed and opened her book wistfully. "You ought to be kind to everybody, Ada," she said vaguely, "but I really think I shall have to take you out of the public school. It is such a mixed crowd there. I should have done it long ago, only your father thinks there is no such education."

Ada saw that in another minute her mother would be buried again in her story. "But what shall I do about Frank and Lucy?" she asked, half crying.

"Why, is Frank in it, too?"

"Yes. I know Lucy has been talking to him. He came back and got her valentines."

"Oh, pshaw! Don't make a quarrel over it. Just be polite to Alma Driscoll. They 're perfectly respectable people. You don't need to avoid her. Don't worry. Lucy will soon get over her little excitement, and you may be sure she will be glad to make up with you and be more friendly than ever."

Mrs. Singer began to read, and Ada saw it was use-

less to pursue the subject. She left the room undecidedly, her lips pressed together. All right, let Lucy befriend Alma. She would n't *look* at her, and they 'd just see which would get tired of it first.

This hard little determination seemed to give Ada a good deal of comfort for the present, and she longed for to-morrow, to begin to show Lucy Berry what she had lost.

Meanwhile Alma Driscoll had hastened home to an empty cottage, where she threw herself on the calico-covered bed and gave way again to her hurt and sorrow, until she had cried herself to sleep.

There her mother found her when she returned from work. Mrs. Driscoll had plenty of troubles of her own in these days, adjusting herself to her present situation and trying hard to fill the position which her old friend Mr. Knapp had found for her. Alma knew this, and every evening when her mother came home from the factory she met her cheerfully, and had so far bravely refrained from telling of the trials at school, which were big ones to her, and which she often longed to pour out; but the sight of her mother's face always silenced her. She knew, young as she was, that her mother was finding life in the great school of the world as hard as she was in pretty Miss Joslyn's room; and so she kept still, but her eyes grew bigger, and her mother saw it.

To-day when Mrs. Driscoll came in, she was surprised to find the house dark. She lighted the lamp and saw Alma asleep on the bed. "Poor little dear," she thought. "The hours must seem long between school and my coming home."

She went around quietly, getting supper, and when it was ready she came again to the bed and kissed Alma's cheek.

"Does n't my little girl want anything to eat to-night?" she asked.

Alma turned and opened her eyes.

"Guess which it is," went on Mrs. Driscoll, smiling. "Breakfast or supper."

"Oh, have you come?" Alma sat up. She clasped her arms around her mother. "Please don't make me go to school any more," she said, the big sob with which she went to sleep rising again in her throat.

"Why, what has happened, dear?" Mrs. Driscoll grew serious.

"I don't want to tell you, mother, only please let me stay at home. I 'll study just as hard."

"You 'd be lonely here all day, Alma."

"I want to be lonely," returned the little girl earnestly.

Mrs. Driscoll looked very sober. "Let 's sit down at the table," she said, "for I have your boiled egg all ready."

Alma took her place opposite her mother. Supper was usually the bright spot in the day, but this evening there seemed nothing but clouds.

"I want to hear all about it, Alma, but you 'd better eat first," said Mrs. Driscoll, as she poured the tea.

"It is n't anything very much," replied the little girl, torn between the longing for sympathy and unwillingness to give her mother pain; "only there are n't any lonely children in that school. Everybody has some one she likes to play with."

A pang of understanding went through the mother's heart, so tender that she forced a smile.

"Oh, my dearie," she said, "you remind me of the old song, —

> 'Every lassie has her laddie,
> Nane, they say, have I,
> But all the lads, they smile on me,
> When comin' thro' the rye.'

If my Alma smiles on all the children, they 'll all smile on her."

Alma shook her head. It was too great an undertaking to explain all those daily experiences of longing and disappointment to her mother. The child's throat grew so full of the sob that she could not swallow the nice egg.

"This is Valentine's Day," she said, with an effort. "They had a box in school. Everybody got pretty ones but me. They sent me a 'comic.'"

She swallowed bravely between the sentences, but big tears rolled down her cheeks and splashed on the gingham apron.

"Well, was n't it meant to make you laugh, dearie?"

"N-no. It was — was a hateful one. I — I can't tell you."

A line came in Mrs. Driscoll's forehead. Her swift thought pictured the scene only too vividly. She swallowed, too.

"Silly pictures can't hurt us, Alma," she said.

"But please don't make me go back," returned the child earnestly. "I cried and ran away, and I know all the other children laughed, and, oh, mother, I *can't* go back!" She was sobbing again, now, and trying to dry her tears with her apron.

Mrs. Driscoll's lips pressed firmly together to keep from quivering.

"Mother," said Alma brokenly, as soon as she could speak again, "when do you think father will come home?"

For a minute the mother could not reply. The last letter she had received from her husband had sounded discouraged, and for six weeks now she had heard nothing. Her anxiety was very great; but it made her position at the factory more than ever important, while it increased the difficulty of performing her work.

"I can't tell, dearie," she answered low. "We must pray and wait."

As she finished speaking there came a loud knock at the door. A very unusual sound this, for no one had yet called on them, except Mr. Knapp, once on business.

"I 'll go," said Mrs. Driscoll. "Wipe your eyes, Alma."

To her surprise, when she opened the door no one was there. Something white on the step caught her eye in the gloom. It was a box, and when she brought it to the light, she saw that it was addressed to Miss Alma Driscoll.

Her heart was too sore to hand it to the child until she had made certain that its contents were not designed to hurt. One glimpse of the gold and red interior, however, made her clap on the cover again. She brought the box to the table and seated herself.

"What's all this?" she asked, passing it to the child. "It seems to be for you. There was nobody there, but I found that on the step."

Alma's swollen eyes looked wonderingly at the box as she took off the cover and discovered the elaborate valentine.

"My! What a beauty!" exclaimed her mother.

The little girl lifted the red roses and looked at the verses. The catches kept coming in her throat and she smiled faintly.

"Who is this that has n't any friend?" asked Mrs. Driscoll cheeringly.

"Somebody was sorry," returned Alma. "I wish they did n't have to be sorry for me."

"Oh, you can't be sure. When I was a little girl all the best part of Valentine's Day was running around to the houses with them after dark. How do you know that this was n't meant for you all day?"

"Because I remember it. Miss Joslyn handed it to Lucy Berry out of the school box. Lucy is the prettiest" —

Another loud knocking at the door interrupted.

Mrs. Driscoll answered the call. A big white envelope lay on the step, and it was addressed to Alma. This time the latter's smile was a little brighter as she took out a handsome card covered with garlands and swinging cupids and inscribed "To my Valentine."

"Well, I never saw any prettier ones," said Mrs. Driscoll.

"But they were n't bought for me," returned Alma.

When soon again a knocking sounded on the door and a third valentine appeared, blossoming with violets, above which butterflies hovered, Mrs. Driscoll leaned lovingly toward her little girl.

"Alma," she said. "I think you were mistaken in

DISCOVERED THE ELABORATE VALENTINE

saying that *all* the children laughed when you received that 'comic.' Now," in a different tone, "let 's have some fun! Some child or children are giving you the very best they have. Let 's catch the next one who comes, and find out who your friends are!"

"Oh, no," returned Alma, smiling, but shrinking shyly from the idea.

"Yes, indeed. We all used to try when I was little. I 'm going to stand by the door and hold it open a bit and you see if I don't catch somebody."

Alma lifted her shoulders. She was n't sure that she liked to have her mother try this; but Mrs. Driscoll went to the door, set it ajar in the dark, and stood beside it.

She did not expect there would be any further greetings, and did this rather to amuse Alma, who sat examining her three valentines with a tearful little smile; but it was a very short time before another knock sounded on the usually neglected door, and quick as a wink it opened and Mrs. Driscoll's hand flying out caught another hand. A little scream followed, and in a second she had drawn a young lady into the tiny hall.

They could n't see one another's faces very well in the gloom.

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" exclaimed Mrs. Driscoll, very much embarrassed. "I was trying to catch a valentine."

"Well, you did," laughed the stranger. "There 's one on the step now, unless my skirt switched it off when I jumped. I did n't intend to come in this time, though I meant to return after I had done an errand;

but now I 'm here I 'll stay a minute if it is n't too early."

"If you 'll excuse the table," returned Mrs. Driscoll. "Alma and I have a late tea." She stooped at the door and picked up a valentine from the edge of the step, and both women were smiling as they entered the room where Alma was standing, flushed and wide-eyed, scarcely able to believe that she recognized the voice.

Sure enough, as the visitor came into the lamplight, the little girl saw that the valentine her mother had caught and brought in out of the dark was really Miss Joslyn. She could hardly believe her eyes as she looked at the merry, blushing face which she was wont to see so serious and watchful. All the pretty teacher's scholars admired her, but she had a dignity and strictness which gave them some awe of her, too, and it seemed wonderful to Alma that this important person should be standing here and laughing with her mother, right in their own sitting-room.

Miss Joslyn's bright eyes saw signs of tears in her pupil's face, and she also saw the handsome valentines strewn upon the table. "Well, well, Alma!" she exclaimed softly, "you have quite a show there!"

"And here is another," said Mrs. Driscoll, handing the latest arrival to the little girl. Alma smiled gratefully at her teacher as she opened the envelope and took out a dove in full flight, carrying a leaf in its beak. On the leaf was printed in gold letters the word *Love*.

"I was caught in the act, Alma," laughed Miss Joslyn, "but I guess I am too old and slow to be running about at night with valentines."

"I like it the best of all," replied the little girl. "It was bought for me," she added in her own thought, and she was right. Twenty minutes ago the white dove had been reposing at a stationer's, with every prospect of remaining there until another Valentine's Day came around.

"Please sit down, Miss Joslyn," said Mrs. Driscoll.

"Well, just for a minute," replied the young lady, taking the offered chair, "but I wish you would finish your supper."

"We had, really," replied Mrs. Driscoll, smiling, "or I should n't have been playing such a game by the door. You have n't been the giver of all these valentines, I suppose?"

"Oh, no, indeed. Those are from some of the school children, no doubt. I 've been trying to find an evening to come here for some time, but my work is n't done when school is out."

"I 'm sure it is n't," replied Mrs. Driscoll, while Alma sat with her dove in her hands, watching the bright face that looked happy and at home in these unusual surroundings. It seemed so very strange to be close to Miss Joslyn, like this, where the teacher had no bell to touch and no directions to give.

She looked at Alma and spoke: "The public school is a little hard for new scholars at first," she said, "where they enter in the middle of a term. You are going to like it better after a while, Alma."

"I think she will, too," put in Mrs. Driscoll. "My hours are long at the factory and I have liked to think of Alma as safe in school. Does she do pretty well in her studies, Miss Joslyn?"

"Yes, I have no fault to find." The visitor smiled at Alma. "You haven't become much acquainted yet," went on Miss Joslyn. "I have noticed that you eat your lunch alone. So do I. Supposing you and I have it together for a while until you are more at home with the other scholars. I have another chair in my corner, and we 'll have a cosy time."

Alma's heart beat fast. She had never heard that an invitation from royalty is equivalent to a command, but instantly all possibility of staying at home from school disappeared. The picture rose before her thought of Miss Joslyn as she always appeared at the long recess: her chair swung about until her profile only was visible, the white napkin on her desk, the book in her hand as she read and ate at one and the same time. Little did Alma suspect what it meant to the kind teacher to give up that precious half-hour of solitude; but Miss Joslyn saw the child's eyes grow bright at the dazzling prospect, and noted the color that covered even her forehead as she murmured thanks and looked over at her mother for sympathy.

The young lady talked on for a few minutes and then said good-night, leaving an atmosphere of brightness behind her.

"Oh, mother, I don't know what all the children will say," said Alma, clasping her hands together. "I 'm going to eat lunch with Miss Joslyn!"

"It 's fine," responded Mrs. Driscoll, glad of the change in her little girl's expression, and wishing the ache at her own heart could be as easily comforted. "Do you suppose Valentine's Day is over, dearie, or had I better stand by the door again?"

"Oh, they would n't send me any more!" replied Alma, looking fondly at her dove. "I think Lucy Berry was so kind to give me her lovely things; but I 'd like to give them back."

"No, indeed, that would n't do," replied Mrs. Driscoll. "I 'm going to stand there once more. Perhaps I 'll catch somebody else to prove to you that Lucy is n't the only one thinking about you."

Mrs. Driscoll returned quietly to her post, and Alma could see her smiling face through the open door.

Alma had very much wanted to send valentines to a few children, herself; but five cents was all the spending money she could have, and she had bought with it one valentine which had been addressed to Lucy Berry in the school box. She was glad it had not come back to her to-night. That would have been hardest of all to bear.

Just as she was thinking this there did come another knock at the door. The child looked up eagerly, and swiftly again Mrs. Driscoll's hand flew out, and grasping a garment, pulled gently and firmly.

"Well, well, ma'am!" exclaimed a bass voice, and this time it was the hostess's turn to give a little cry, followed by a laugh, as a stout, elderly man with chin whiskers came deliberately in.

She retreated. "Oh, Mr. Knapp, please excuse me! I thought you were a valentine!"

"Nobody 'd have me, ma'am. Nobody 'd have me. Not a mite o' use to try to stick a pair o' Cupid's wings on these shoulders. It would take an awful pair to fly me. Well, come now," he added, with a broad, approving smile at the laughing mother and child, "I 'm right

down glad to see you playin' a game. I 've thought, the last few days, you was lookin' kind o' peaked and down in the mouth; so, seein' as we found a letter for you that was somehow overlooked this afternoon, I decided I 'd bring it along. Might be fetchin' you a fortune, for all I knew."

Mrs. Driscoll's smile vanished, and her eyes looked eagerly into the good-humored red face, as Mr. Knapp sought deliberately in his coat pocket and brought forth an envelope, at sight of which Alma's mother flushed and paled.

"You have a valentine, too!" cried the little girl.

"Yes, it is from father. Won't you sit down, Mr. Knapp?"

"No, no, I 'll just run along and let you read your letter in peace. I know you want to, and I hope it brings good news. If it don't, you just remember it 's always darkest before day. Frank Driscoll 's bound to come out right side up. He 's a good feller."

So saying, the kind friend to this couple took his departure, and Mrs. Driscoll's eager fingers tore open the envelope.

At the first four words, "It 's all right, Nettie," she crushed the paper against her happy eyes and then hugged Alma.

It *was* all right. Mr. Driscoll had a position at last, and by the time summer should come he was sure they could be together again.

After the letter had been read and re-read, the two washed and put away the supper dishes with light hearts, and the next morning Mrs. Driscoll went off smiling to the factory, leaving a rather excited little

girl to finish the morning work and arrange the lunch in the tin pail which was to be opened beside Miss Joslyn's desk.

There were two other excited children getting ready for school that morning. They had both slept on their troubles, but were very differently prepared to meet the day. Ada Singer's mental attitude was, "I 'll never give in, and Lucy Berry will find it out."

Lucy felt comforted, but there remained now the great step of eating lunch with Alma and being punished by Ada in consequence. Her heart fluttered at the thought; but she was going to try not to think of herself at all, but to do right and let the consequences take care of themselves.

"There is n't any other way," her mother said to her at parting. "Anything which you do in any other spirit has simply to be done over again some time."

"Not one error-fairy shall cheat me to-day," thought Lucy stoutly, and then a disconcerting idea came to her: supposing Alma should n't come to school at all!

But Alma was there. Ada Singer, too, wearing a charming new dress and with a head held up so stiffly that it could n't turn to look at anybody. Frank Morse, from his seat at the back of the room, looked curiously from one to another of the three girls and shook his head at his book.

At the first recess Ada Singer spoke to him as he was going out. "Wait a minute, Frank. It is so mild to-day, mother is coming for me after school with the auto. We 're going to take a long spin. Would n't you like to go?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Frank; "but don't you want

to take Lucy in my place?" He was a little uncomfortable.

"If I did I should n't ask you," returned Ada coolly.

"All right. Thank you," said Frank, but as he joined the boys on the playground he felt still more uncomfortable.

Lucy Berry, as soon as the recess bell had sounded, had gone straight to Alma. Her cheeks were very red, and the brown eyes were full of kindness.

Alma looked up in shy pleasure at her, a little embarrassed because she did n't know whether to thank Lucy for the valentines or not.

The latter did not give her time to speak. She said: "I came to see if you won't eat your lunch with me to-day."

Alma colored. How full the world was of kind people! "I 'd love to," she answered, "but I think Ada wants to have you all alone and" —

"But I 'd like it if you would," said Lucy firmly, "because I want to get more acquainted. My mother is coming to see yours on Sunday afternoon, too."

"I 'm real glad she is," replied Alma, fairly basking in the light from Lucy's eyes. "I 'd love to eat lunch with you, but Miss Joslyn invited me to have it with her to-day."

"Oh!" Lucy's gaze grew larger. "Why, that 's lovely!" she said, in an awed tone.

They had very little more time for talk before the short recess was over. As the children took their way to their seats, Alma was amazed to see Ada Singer pass Lucy without a word, and even turn her head to

avoid looking at her. The child had watched this close friendship so wistfully that she instantly saw there was trouble, and naturally thought of her invitation from Lucy as connected with it.

At the long recess, thoughts of this possible quarrel mingled with her pleasure in the visit with Miss Joslyn, who was a charming hostess. Many a girl or boy came to peep into the forbidden schoolroom, when the report was circulated that Alma Driscoll was up on the platform laughing and talking with the teacher and eating lunch with her in the cosy corner.

Miss Joslyn insisted on exchanging a part of her lunch for Alma's, spreading the things together on the white napkin, and chatting so eagerly and gayly that the little girl's face beamed. She soon told the teacher about the good news that came after she left the night before, and Miss Joslyn was very sympathetic. "It 's a pretty nice world, is n't it?" she asked, smiling.

"Yes 'm, it 's just a lovely world to-day, only — only there 's one thing, Miss Joslyn."

"What is it?"

"I think Lucy Berry and Ada Singer have had a quarrel."

"Oh, the inseparables? I guess not," the teacher smiled.

"Yes 'm. The worst is, I think it 's about me. Could I go out in the dressing-room to get my handkerchief, and see if they 're on their usual window-sill?"

"Yes, indeed, if it will make you feel easier."

So Alma went out and soon returned. Lucy and Ada were not on their window-sill. Each was sitting with a different group of girls.

Miss Joslyn saw the serious discomfort this gave her little companion, and persuaded her away from the subject, returning to the congenial theme of Mr. Driscoll's new prospects.

But as soon as recess was over, Alma's thoughts went back to Ada Singer, for she felt certain that whatever had happened, Ada was the one to be appeased. The child could not bear to think of being the cause of trouble coming to dear, kind Lucy.

When school was dismissed, Ada Singer, her head carried high, put on her things in the dressing-room within a few feet of Lucy, but ignoring her presence. "I love her," thought Lucy, "and she does love me. Nothing can cheat either of us."

Ada went out without a look, and waited at the head of the stairs for Frank Morse. Alma Driscoll hastened up to her.

Ada drew away. Alma need n't think that because she had shared Miss Joslyn's luncheon she would now be as good as anybody.

"Can I speak to you just one minute?" asked the little girl so eagerly, yet meekly, that Ada turned to her; but now that she had gained attention, Alma did not know how to proceed. She hesitated and clasped and unclasped her hands over the gingham apron. "Please — please" — she stammered, "don't be cross with Lucy. She felt sorry for me, but I 'll never eat lunch with her, — truly."

"You don't know what you 're talking about," rejoined Ada coldly.

"Yes, she does." It was Frank Morse's voice, and Ada, turning quickly, saw him and Lucy standing a

few feet behind her. The four children were alone in the deserted hall.

"Here," went on Frank bluntly, "I want you two girls to kiss and make up."

Ada blushed violently as she met Lucy's questioning, wistful look.

"Are you coming down to the auto, Frank?" she asked coolly. "Mother will be waiting."

"Oh, come now, Ada, be a good fellow. If you and Lucy want to put on the gloves, I 'll see fair play; but for pity's sake drop this icy look business. Great Scott, I 'm glad I 'm not a girl!"

The genuine disgust in the boy's tone as he closed did disturb Ada a little, and then Lucy added at once, beseechingly:

"Oh, it 's like a bad dream, Ada, to have anything the matter between us!"

"Whose fault is it?" asked Ada sharply. "Why did you fly at me so yesterday?"

Both girls had forgotten Alma who, like a soberly dressed, big-eyed little bird, was watching the proceedings in much distress.

"You just the same as accused me of sending Alma the 'comic,'" continued Ada.

"Oh, *did n't* you send it?" cried Lucy, fairly springing at her friend in her relief. "I don't care what you do to me then! I deserve anything, for I really thought you did."

Her eloquent face and the love in her eyes broke down some determination in Ada's proud little heart, and raised another, perhaps quite as proud, but at least with an element of nobility. She foresaw that

the dishonesty was going to be more than she could bear.

"I did send it," she said suddenly, with her chin up. Then, ignoring Frank and Lucy's open-mouthed stares, she turned toward Alma. "I sent you the 'comic,'" she went on. "I thought it would be fun, but it was n't, and I 'm sorry. I should like to have you forgive me."

Her tone was far from humble, but it was music to Alma's ears. The little girl clasped her hands together. "Oh, I do," she replied earnestly, "and it made everybody so kind! Please don't feel bad about it. I got the loveliest valentines in the evening, and Miss Joslyn came to see us, and we had a letter from my father and he has a splendid place to work and — and everything!"

Ada breathed a little faster at the close of this breathless speech. Alma's eagerness to ascribe even her father's good fortune to the sending of the 'comic' touched her. In her embarrassment she took another determination.

"If you 'll excuse me, Frank," she said turning to him, "I think I 'll take Alma home in the auto, instead of you."

"All right," returned the boy, his face flushed. "You 're a brick, Ada!"

This praise from one who seldom praised gave Ada secret elation, and made her resolve to deserve it. "Good-by, Lucy," was all she said, but the girls' eyes met, and Lucy knew the trouble was over.

As Ada and Alma went downstairs, Lucy ran to the hall window, and Frank followed. "Don't let them see us," she said joyfully.

So, very cautiously, the two peeped and saw the handsome automobile waiting. Mrs. Singer was sitting within and they saw Ada say something to her; then Alma, her thick coat over the gingham apron, and the large dinner-pail in her hand, climbed in, Ada after her, and away they all went.

Lucy turned to Frank with her face glowing.

"It 's all right now," she said. "When Ada takes hold she never lets go; and now she 's taken hold right!"

CHAPTER XVI

A MORNING RIDE

Mrs. Evringham's listeners thanked her, then discussed the story a few minutes.

"I 'd like to get acquainted with Alma," said Jewel, "and help be kind to her."

"Oh, she 's going to have a very good time now," replied Mr. Evringham. "One can see that with half an eye. Were there any Almas where you went to school, Jewel?"

"No, there were n't. We did n't bring lunches and we went home in a 'bus."

"Jewel went to a very nice private school," said Mrs. Evringham. "Her teachers were Christian Scientists and I made their dresses for them in payment."

The logs were red in the fireplace now, and the roar of the wind-driven sea came from the beach.

"Well, we 've a good school for her," replied Mr. Evringham, "and there 'll be no dresses to make, either."

His daughter looked at him wistfully. "I 'm very happy when I think of it," she answered, "for there is other work I would rather do."

"I should think so, indeed. Catering to the whims of a lot of silly women who don't know their own minds! It must be the very — yes, very unpleasant.

Yes, we have a fine school in Bel-Air. Jewel, we 're going to work you hard next winter. How shall you like that?"

"My music lessons will be the most fun," returned Jewel.

"And dancing school beside."

"Oh, grandpa, I 'll love that! I used to know girls who went, in Chicago."

"Yes, I 'm sure you will. You shall learn all the latest jigs and flings, too, that any of the children know. I think you ought to learn them quickly. You 've been hopping up and down ever since I knew you."

Jewel exchanged a happy glance with her mother and clapped her hands at the joyful prospect.

Mrs. Evringham looked wistfully at her father-in-law. "I hope you 'll be willing I should do the work I want to, father."

"What 's that? Writing books? Perfectly willing, I assure you. I think you 've made a very good start."

Mrs. Evringham smiled. "No, not writing books. Practicing Christian Science."

"Well, you do that all the time, don't you?"

"I mean taking patients."

"What!" Mr. Evringham straightened up in his chair and frowned at her incredulously. "Anybody? Tom, Dick, and Harry? You can't mean it!"

His tone was so severe that Jewel rose from her place on the rug and, climbing into his lap, rested her head on his breast. His hand closed on the soft little one unconsciously. "I suppose I don't understand you," he added, a shade more mildly.

"Not in your house, father," returned Julia. She

had been preparing in thought for this moment for days. "Of course it would n't do to have strangers coming and going there."

"Nonsense, nonsense, my dear girl," brusquely, "put it out of your head at once. There is no need for you to do anything after this but bring up your child and keep your husband's shirt buttons in place."

"I won't neglect either," replied Julia quietly; "but Mr. Reeves says there is great need of practitioners in Bel-Air. You know where the reading-room is? There is a little room leading out of it that I could have."

"For an office, do you mean? Nonsense," exclaimed Mr. Evringham again. "Harry would n't think of allowing it."

Julia smiled. "Will you if he does?"

"What shall I say to her, Jewel?" The broker looked down into the serious face.

"I suppose mother ought to do it," replied the child. "Of course every one who knows how and has time wants to. You can see that, grandpa, because is n't your rheumatism better?"

"Yes. I like our resident physician very much; but we need her ourselves. I don't think I shall ever give my consent to such a thing."

"Oh, yes, you will, grandpa, if it 's right." The flaxen head on his breast wagged wisely. "Some morning you 'll come downstairs and say: 'Julia, I think you can go and get that office whenever you like.'"

Mrs. Evringham pressed her handkerchief to her lips. The couple in the armchair were so absorbed in one another that they did not observe her, and the broker's face showed such surprise.

"Upon my word!" he exclaimed, after a minute. "Upon my word!"

"Are you all through talking about that?" asked Jewel, after a pause.

"I am, certainly," replied Mr. Evringham.

"And I," added his daughter. She was content that the seed was planted, and preferred not to press the subject.

"Well, then," continued Jewel, "I was wondering, grandpa, if the cracks in that boat could n't be stuffed up a little more so I would n't have to bail, and then I could learn how to row."

"Ho, these little hands row!" returned Mr. Evringham scoffingly.

"Why, I could, grandpa. I just know I could. It was fun to bail at first, but I 'm getting a little tired of it now, and I love to be on the pond — oh, almost as much as on Star!"

Mr. Evringham's eyes shone with an unusually pleased expression. "Is it possible!" he returned. "It 's a water-baby we have here, a regular water-baby!"

"Yes, grandpa, when I know how to swim and row and sail — yes," chuckling at the expression of exaggerated surprise which her listener assumed, "and sail, too, I 'll be so *happy!*"

"Oh, come now, an eight-year-old baby!"

"I 'll be nine in five weeks, nine years old."

"Well," Mr. Evringham sighed, "that 's better than nineteen."

"Why, grandpa," earnestly, "you forget; perhaps you 'll like me when I 'm grown up."

"It 's possible," returned the broker.

How the sun shone the next morning! The foam on the great rollers that still stormed the beach showed from the farmhouse windows in ever-changing, spreading masses of white. Essex Maid and Star, after a day of ennui, were more than ready for a scamper between the rolling fields where already the goldenrod hinted that summer was passing.

Star had to stretch his pretty legs at a great rate, to keep up with the Maid this morning, though her master moderated her transports. The more like birds they flew, the more Jewel enjoyed it. She knew now how to get Star's best speed, and the pony scarcely felt her weight, so lightly did she adapt herself to his every motion.

With cheeks tingling in the fine salt air, the riders finally came to a walk in the quiet country road.

"I 've been looking up that boat business, Jewel," said Mr. Evringham. "The thing is hardly worth fixing. It would take a good while, just at the time we want the boat, too."

"Well, then," returned the child, "we 'll have to make it do. There are so many happinesses here, it is n't any matter if the boat is n't just right; but I was thinking, grandpa, if you would n't wear such nice shoes, I 'd go barefooted, and then we could both sit on the same seat and let the water come in, while I use one oar and you the other; or" — her face suddenly glowing with a brilliant idea — "we could both wear our bathing-suits!"

"Yes," returned the broker, "I think if you were to row we might need them."

The child laughed.

"No, Jewel, no; we 'd better bathe when we bathe, and row when we row, and not mix them. You could n't do anything with even one of those clumsy oars in that tub of a boat."

As Mr. Evringham said this, he saw the disappointment in the little girl's face as she looked straight ahead, and noted, too, her effort to conquer it.

"Well, I do have so many happinesses," she replied.

"It will be a grand sight at the beach this morning, with the sunlight on the stormy waves," said Mr. Evringham. "The water-baby will have to keep out of them, though."

Jewel lifted her shoulders and looked at him. "Then we ought to row over, don't you think so?"

"You 're not willing to be a thorough-going land lubber, are you?" returned the broker.

"No," Jewel sighed. "I 'd rather bail than keep off the pond. Oh, but I forgot," with a sudden thought, "mother 'd get wet if she rowed over and it would be too bad to make her walk through the fields alone."

There was a little silence and then Mr. Evringham turned the horses into the homeward way.

"I begin to feel as if breakfast would be acceptable, Jewel. How is it with you?"

"Why, I could eat"— began the child hungrily, "I could eat"—

"Eggs?" suggested the broker, as she paused to think of something sufficiently inedible.

"Almost," returned the child seriously. Another pause, and then she continued. "Grandpa, would n't it

be nice if mother had somebody to play with, too, so we could go out in the boat whenever we wanted to?"

"Yes. Why doesn't your father hurry up his affairs?"

Jewel looked at the broker. "He has. He thought it was error for him not to let the people there know that he was going to leave them after a while; so they began right off to try to find somebody else, and they have already."

"Eh?" asked the broker. "Your father is through in Chicago, then? When did you hear that?"

"Mother had the letter yesterday and she told me when I went to bed last night."

"Why, then he 'll be coming right on."

"We 'd like to have him," returned Jewel; "but mother was n't sure how you would feel about it, to have father here so long before business commences."

"Why did n't she tell me last evening?" asked Mr. Evringham.

"I *think*," returned Jewel, "that she wanted father so *much* — and — and that she thought perhaps you would n't think it was best, and — well, I think she felt a little bashful. You know mother is n't your real relation, grandpa," the child's head fell to one side apologetically.

Mr. Evringham stroked his mustache; but instantly he turned grave again. His eyes met Jewel's.

"I think, as you say, it would be rather a convenience to us if your mother had some one to play with, too. Suppose we send for him, eh?"

"Oh, let 's," cried the child joyfully.

"Done with you!" returned the broker, and he gave

the rein to Essex Maid. Star had suddenly so much ado to gallop along beside her, that Jewel's laugh rang out merrily.

When, a little later, the family met in the dining-room for breakfast, Mr. Evringham accosted his daughter cheerfully:

"Well, this is good news I hear about Harry."

Julia flushed and met his eyes wistfully. The broker had never seen any resemblance in Jewel to her until this moment; but it was precisely the child's expression that now returned his look.

"It 's my boy she wants, too," he thought. "By George, she shall have him."

"I was n't sure that you would think it was good news for Harry to give up his position so soon, but there was n't any other honest way," she replied.

"The sooner the break is made, the better," returned Mr. Evringham. "I shall wire him to close up everything at once and join us as soon as he can."

Mother and child exchanged a happy look and Jewel clapped her hands. "Father 's coming, father 's coming!" she cried joyfully.

The broker bent his brows upon her.

"Jewel, are you strictly honorable?" he asked.

"I don't know," returned the little girl.

"You said a few minutes ago that it was a playfellow for your mother that you wanted. Your enthusiasm is unseemly."

"Oh, father 's just splendid," said Jewel.

After breakfast the three repaired to a certain covered piazza where they always read the lesson for the day; then Mr. Evringham suggested that they go

promptly to the beach to see the splendid show before the rollers regained their usual monotonous dignity.

"Jewel and I thought we would go over in the boat instead of through the fields, but that old tub is rather uninviting for a lady's clothes."

"I think I will take the solitary saunter in preference," returned Mrs. Evringham. "You and Jewel row over if you like."

"No, we 'd rather walk with you," said the child heroically.

Julia smiled. "I don't want you. There are birds and flowers."

"Well, come down and see us off, anyway," said Mr. Evringham; so the three moved over the grass toward the pond; two walking sedately and one skipping from sheer high spirits.

As they drew near the little wharf the child's quick eyes perceived that there were two boats floating there, one each side of it.

"See that, grandpa! There 's some visitor around here," she said, running ahead of the others. A light, graceful boat rose and fell on the waves. It was golden brown within and without, and highly varnished. Its four seats were furnished with wine-colored cushions. Four slim oars lay along its bottom, and its rowlocks gleamed. Best of all, a slender mast with snowy sail furled about it lay along the edge.

"Grandpa, p-*lease* ask somebody whose it is and if we could get in just a minute!" begged Jewel, in hushed excitement.

"Oh, they 're all good neighbors about here. They won't mind, whoever it is," returned Mr. Evringham

carelessly, and to the child's wonder and doubt he jumped aboard.

"Pretty neat outfit, is n't it?" he continued, as he stood a moment looking over the lines of the craft, and then lifted the mast.

"Oh, it 'll sail, too, it 'll sail, too!" cried Jewel, hopping up and down. "Oh, mother, did you ever *hear* of such a pretty boat?"

"Never," replied Mrs. Evringham. "It must be that some one has come over from one of those fine homes across the pond."

Privately, she was a little surprised by the manner in which Mr. Evringham was making himself at home. He set the mast in its place and then, his arms akimbo, stood regarding Jewel's tense, sun-browned countenance and sparkling eyes.

"How would it be for me to go up to the house and see if we could get permission to take a little sail?" he asked.

"Oh, it would be splendid, grandpa," responded Jewel, "but — but he might say no, and *could* I get in just a minute first?"

"Yes, come on." The child waited for no second invitation, but sprang into the boat and examined its dry, shining floor and felt its buttoned cushions with admiring awe.

"Hello, see here," said Mr. Evringham, bending over the further side. "Easy, now," for Jewel had scrambled to see. He trimmed the boat while her flaxen head leaned eagerly over.

Beautifully painted in shining black letters she read the name JEWEL.

The child lifted her head quickly and gazed at him. "Grandpa, that almost could n't — *happen*," she said, in amazement, catching her breath.

He nodded. "There 's one thing pretty certain, Nature won't draw off the pond now that this has come to you."

"Me, *me!*" cried the child. Her lips trembled and she turned a little pale under the tan as she remembered how the pony came. Then her eyes, dark with excitement, suffused, and recklessly she flung herself upon the broker's neck while the boat rocked wildly.

Mr. Evringham waved one hand toward his daughter while he seized the mast. "Tell Harry we left our love," he cried.

"Dear me, Jewel, what are you *doing!*" called Mrs. Evringham.

"It 's mine, mother, it 's mine," cried the child, lifting her head to shout it, and then ducking back into the broker's silk shirt front.

"What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Evringham, coming gingerly out upon the wharf, which was such an unsteady old affair that she had remained on terra firma.

"Why, you see," responded Mr. Evringham, "the farmhouse boat was n't so impossible for two old sea-dogs like Jewel and me, but when it came to inviting her lady mother to go out with us, I saw that we must have something else. Well, it seems as if Jewel approved of this."

He winked at his daughter over the flaxen head on his breast.

"What a fortunate, fortunate girl!" exclaimed

Julia. "I can hardly wait to sit on one of those beautiful red cushions."

"Jewel will invite you pretty soon, I think," said Mr. Evringham. "I hope so, for one of my feet is turned in and she is standing on it, but I would n't have her get off until she is entirely ready."

He could feel the child swallowing hard, and though she moved her little feet, she could not lift her face.

"Grandpa," she began, in an unsteady, muffled tone, "I did n't tease you too much about the old boat, did I?"

"No, — no, child!"

"Shall you — shall you like this one, too?"

"Well, I should rather think so. I have to give all my shoes to the poor as it is. I 've nothing left fit to put on but my riding-boots. How shall we go over to the beach this time, Jewel, row or sail? Your mother is waiting for you to ask her to get in."

Slowly the big bows behind the child's ears came down into their normal position. She kissed her grandfather fervently and then turned her flushed face and eyes toward her mother.

"Come in, so you can see the boat's name," she said, and her smile shone out like sunshine from an April sky.

"Give me your hand, then, dearie. You know I 'm a poor city girl and have n't a very good balance."

The name was duly examined, and Mrs. Evringham's "oh's" of wonder and admiration were long-drawn.

"See the darling cushions, mother. You can wear your best clothes here. It 's just like a parlor!"

"A very narrow parlor, Jewel. Move carefully." Mrs. Evringham had seated herself in the stern. "Perhaps I can help with the rudder," she added, taking hold of the lines.

"Just as the admiral says," returned the broker.

"Oh, grandpa, you 'll have to be the admiral," said Jewel excitedly. "I 'll be the crew and" —

"And the owner," suggested Mr. Evringham.

"Yes! Oh, mother, what *will* father say!"

"He 'll say that you are a very happy, fortunate little girl, and that Divine Love is always showing your grandpa how to do kind things for you."

The child's expression as she looked up at the admiral made him apprehend another rush.

"Steady, Jewel, steady. Remember we are n't wearing our bathing-suits. Which are we going to do, row or sail?"

"Oh, *sail*," cried the child, "and it 'll never be the first time again! *Could* you wait while I get Anna Belle?"

"Certainly."

Like a flash Jewel sprang from the boat and fled up the wharf and lawn.

Mr. Evringham smiled and shook his head at his daughter. "A creature of fire and dew," he said.

"I don't know how to thank you for all your goodness to her," said Julia simply.

"It would offend me to be thanked for anything I did for Jewel," he returned.

"I understand. She is your own flesh and blood. But what I feel chiefly grateful for is the wisdom of your kindness. I believe you will never spoil her. I

should rather we had remained poor and struggling than to have that."

Mr. Evringham gave the speaker a direct look in which appeared a trace of humor.

"I think I am slightly inclined," he returned, "to overlook the fact that you and Harry have any rights in Jewel which should be respected; but theoretically I do acknowledge them, and it is going to be my study not to spoil her. I have an idea that we could n't," he added.

"Oh, yes, we could," returned Julia, "very easily."

"Well, there are n't quite enough of us to try," said the broker. "I believe while we 're waiting for Jewel, I 'll just step up to the house and get some one to send that telegram to Harry."

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Julia eagerly; and in a minute she was left alone, swaying up and down on the lapping water, in the salt, sunny breeze, while the JEWEL pulled at the mooring as if eager to try its snowy wings; and happy were the grateful, prayerful thoughts that swelled her heart.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BIRTHDAY

One stormy evening Harry Evringham blew into the farmhouse, wet from his drive from the station, and was severally hugged, kissed, and shaken by the three who waited eagerly to receive him. The month that ensued was perhaps the happiest that had ever come into the lives of either of the quartette; certainly it was the happiest period to the married pair who had waited ten years for their wedding trip.

The days were filled with rowing, sailing, swimming, riding, driving, picnics, walks, talks, and *dolce far niente* evenings, when the wind was still and the moon silvered field and sea.

The happy hours were winged, the goldenrod strewed the land with sunshine, and August slipped away.

One morning when Jewel awoke it was with a sensation that the day was important. She looked over at Anna Belle and shook her gently. "Wake up, dearie," she said. "'Green pastures are before me,' it 's my birthday."

But Anna Belle, who certainly looked very pretty in her sleep, and perhaps suspected it, seemed unable to overcome her drowsiness until Jewel set her up against the pillow, when her eyes at once flew open and she appeared ready for sociability.

"Do you remember Gladys on her birthday morn-

ing, dearie? She could n't think of anything she wanted, and I 'm almost like her. Grandpa 's given me my boat, that 's his birthday present; and mother says she should think it was enough for ten birthdays, and so should I. Poor grandpa! In ten birthdays I 'll be nineteen, and then he says I 'll have to cry on his shoulder instead of into his vest. But grandpa 's such a joker! Of course grown-up ladies hardly ever cry. If father and mother have anything for me, I 'll be just delighted; but I can't think what I want. I have the darlingest pony in the world, and the dearest Little Faithful watch, and the best boat that was ever built, and I rowed father quite a long way yesterday all alone, and I did n't splash much, but he caught hold of the side of the boat and pretended he was afraid" — Jewel's laughter gurgled forth at the remembrance — "he 's such a joker; and I do understand the sail, too, but they won't let me do it alone yet. Father says he can see in my eye that I should love to jibe. I don't even know what jibe is, so how could I do it?"

Jewel had proceeded so far in her confidences when the door of her room opened, and her father and mother came in in their bath-wrappers.

"We thought we heard you improving Anna Belle's mind," said her father, taking her in his arms and kissing both her cheeks and chin, the tip of her nose and her forehead, and then carefully repeating the programme.

"But that was ten!" cried Jewel.

"Certainly. If you did n't have one to grow on, how would you get along?"

Then her pretty mother, her brown hair hanging in

long braids, took her turn and kissed Jewel's cheeks till they were pinker than ever. "Many, many happy returns, my little darling," she said. "I did n't know you were n't going riding this morning."

"Yes, grandpa said he expected a man early on business, and he had to be here to see him. Father could have gone with me," said Jewel, looking at him reproachfully, where he sat on the side of the bed, "but when I asked him last night he said — I forget what he said."

"Merely that I did n't believe that horses liked such early dew."

"Oh, Jewel!" laughed Mrs. Evringham, "your father is a lazy, sleepy boy. It 's later than you think, dearie. Hop up now and get ready for breakfast."

They left her, and the little girl arose with great alacrity, for ever since she was a baby her birthday present had always been on the breakfast table.

As soon as she was dressed, she put a blue cashmere wrapper on Anna Belle and carried her downstairs to the room where the Evringham family had their meals, separate from the other inmates of the farmhouse.

Mr. Evringham was standing by the window, reading the newspaper as he waited, and Jewel ran to him and looked up with bright expectation.

"H'm!" he said, not lifting his eyes from the print, "good-morning, Jewel. Essex Maid and Star would hardly speak to me when I was out there just now, they 're so vexed at having to stay indoors this morning."

The child did not reply, but continued to look up, smiling.

"Well," said the broker at last, dropping the paper. "Well? What is it? I don't see anything very exciting. You have n't on your silk dress."

"Grandpa! It 's my *birthday*."

The broker slapped his leg with very apparent annoyance. "Well, now, to think I should have to be told that!"

Jewel laughed and hopped a little as she looked toward the table. "Do you see that bunch under the cloth at my place? That 's my present. Is n't it the most *fun* not to know what it is?"

Mr. Evringham took her up in his arms and weighed her up and down thoughtfully. "Yes," he said, "I believe you are a little heavier than you were yesterday."

The child laughed again.

"Now remember, Jewel, you 're to go slow on this birthday business. Once in two or three years is all very well:"

"Grandpa! people *have* to have birthdays every year," she replied as he set her down, "but after they 're about twenty or something like that, it 's wrong to remember how old they are."

"Indeed?" the broker stroked his mustache. "Ladies especially, I suppose."

"Oh, no," returned Jewel seriously. "Everybody. Mother 's just twenty years older than I am and that 's so easy to remember, it 's going to be hard to forget; but I 've most forgotten how how much older father is," and Jewel looked up with an expression of determination that caused the broker to smile broadly.

"I can understand your mother's being too self-

respecting to pass thirty," he returned, "but just why your father should n't, I fail to understand."

"Why, it 's error to be weak and wear spectacles and have things, is n't it?" asked Jewel, with such swift earnestness that Mr. Evringham endeavored to compose his countenance.

"Have things?" he repeated.

Jewel's head fell to one side. "Why, even you, grandpa," she said lovingly, "even you thought you had the rheumatism."

"I was certainly under that impression."

"But you never would have expected to have it when you were as young as father, would you?"

"Hardly."

"Well, then you see why it 's wrong to make laws about growing old and to remember people's ages."

"Ah, I see what you mean. Everybody thinking the wrong way and jumping on a fellow when he 's down, as it were."

At this moment Jewel's father and mother entered the room, and she instantly forgot every other consideration in her interest as to what charming surprise might be bunched up under the tablecloth.

"Anna Belle can hardly wait to see my present," she said, lifting her shoulders and smiling at her mother.

"She ought to know one thing that 's there, certainly," replied Mrs. Evringham mysteriously.

Jewel held the doll up in front of her. "Have you given me something, dearie?" she asked tenderly. "I do hope you have n't been extravagant."

Then with an abrupt change of manner, she hopped

up into her chair eagerly, and the others took their places.

The very first package that Jewel took out was marked — "With Anna Belle's love." It proved to be a pair of handsome white hair-ribbons, and the donor looked modestly away as Jewel expressed her pleasure and kissed her blushing cheeks.

Next came a box marked with her father's name. Upon opening it there was discovered a set of ermine furs for Anna Belle, — at least they were very white furs with very black tiny tails: collar and muff of a regal splendor, and any one who declined to call them ermine would prove himself a cold skeptic. Jewel jounced up and down in her chair with delight.

"Winter 's coming, you know, Jewel, and Bel-Air Park is a very swell place," said her father.

"And perhaps I 'll have a sled at Christmas and draw Anna Belle on it," said the child joyously. "Here, dearie, let 's see how they fit," and on went the furs over the blue cashmere wrapper, making Anna Belle such a thing of beauty that Jewel gazed at her entranced. The doll was left with her chubby hands in the ample muff and the sumptuous collar half eclipsing her golden curls, while the little girl dived under the cloth once more for the largest package of all.

This was marked with her mother's love and contained handsome plaid material for a dress, with the silk to trim it, and a pair of kid gloves.

Jewel hopped down from her chair and kissed first her father and then her mother. "That 'll be the loveliest dress ! " she said, and she carried it to her grandfather to let him look closer and put his hand upon it.

"Well, well, you are having a nice birthday, Jewel," he said.

"Yes," she replied, putting her arm around his neck and pressing her cheek to his. "We could n't put the boat under the tablecloth, but I 'm thinking about it, grandpa."

After breakfast they all went out to the covered piazza to read the lesson. It was a fine, still morning. The pond rippled dreamily. The roar of the surf was subdued. From Jewel's seat beside her grandfather she could see her namesake glinting in the sun and gracefully rising and falling on the waves in the gentle breeze.

They had all taken comfortable positions and Mrs. Evringham was finding the places in the books.

Mr. Evringham spoke quite loudly: "Well, this is a fine morning, surely, fine."

"It is that," agreed Harry, stretching his long legs luxuriously. "If I felt any better I could n't stand it."

As he was speaking, a strange man in a checked suit came around the corner of the house.

Jewel's eyes grew larger and she straightened up.

"Oh, grandpa, look!" she said softly, and then jumped off the seat to see better. All the little company gazed with interest, for, accompanying the man, was the most superb specimen of a collie dog that they had ever seen. "It 's a golden dog, grandpa," added Jewel.

The collie had evidently just been washed and brushed. His coat was, indeed, of a gleaming yellow. His paws were white, the tip of his tail was white, and his breast was snowy as the thick, soft foam of the breakers. A nar-

row strip of white descended between his eyes, — golden, intelligent eyes, with generations of trustworthiness in them. A silver collar nestled in the long hair about his neck, and altogether he looked like a prince among dogs.

Jewel clasped her hands beneath her chin and gazed at him with all her eyes. He was too splendid to be flown at in her usual manner with animals.

"What a beauty!" ejaculated Harry.

"It *is* a golden dog," said Jewel's mother, looking almost as enthusiastic as the child.

"What have you there?" asked Mr. Evringham of the man. "Something pretty fine, it appears to me."

"Yes, sir, there 's none finer," replied the man, glancing at the animal. "I called to see you on that little matter I wrote you of."

"Yes, yes; well, that will wait. We 're interested in that fine collie of yours. We know something about golden dogs here, eh, Jewel?"

"But this dog could n't dance, grandpa," said the child soberly, drawing nearer to the creature.

"I should think not," remarked the man, smiling. "What would he be doing dancing? I 've seen lions jump the rope in shows; but it never looked fitting, to me."

"No," said Jewel, "this dog ought not to dance;" and as the collie's golden eyes met hers, she drew nearer still in fascination, and he touched her outstretched hand curiously, with his cold nose.

"Oh, well, but we like accomplished dogs," said Mr. Evringham coldly.

"Who says this dog ain't accomplished?" returned the man, in an injured tone. "Just stand back there a bit, young lady."

Jewel retreated and her grandfather put his hand over her shoulder. The man spoke to the dog, and at once the handsome creature sat up, tall and dignified, on his hind legs.

The man only kept him there a few seconds; and then he put him through a variety of other performances. The golden dog shook hands when he was told, rolled over, jumped over a stick, and at last sat up again, and when the man took a bit of sugar from his pocket and balanced it on the creature's nose, he tossed it in the air, and, catching it neatly, swallowed it in a trice.

Jewel was giving subdued squeals of delight, and everybody was laughing with pleasure; for the decorative creature appeared to enjoy his own tricks.

The man looked proudly around upon the company.

"Well," said Mr. Evringham to Jewel, "he is a dog of high degree, like Gabriel's, is n't he? But he 's such a big fellow I think the organ-grinder would n't have such an easy time with *him*."

At the broker's voice, the dog walked up to him and wagged his feathery tail. Jewel's eager hands went out to touch him, but Mr. Evringham held her back.

"He 's a friendly fellow," he went on; then continued to the man, "Would you like to sell him?"

The question set the little girl's heart to beating fast.

"I would, first rate," replied the man, grinning, "but the trouble is I 've sold him once. I 'm taking him to his owner now."

"That 's a handsome collar you have on him."

"Oh, yes, it 's a good one all right," returned the man. "The dog is for a surprise present. The lady I 'm taking him to is going to know him by his name."

"Let 's have a look at it, Jewel," said Mr. Evringham, and he took hold of the silver collar, a familiarity which seemed rather to please the golden dog, who began wagging his tail again, as he looked at Mr. Evringham trustingly.

Jewel bent over eagerly. A single name was engraved clearly on the smooth plate.

"Topaz!" she cried. "His name is Topaz! Grandpa, mother, the golden dog's name is Topaz!"

Mrs. Evringham held up both hands in amazement, while Harry frowned incredulously.

"Did you ever hear of anything so wonderful, grandpa? How *can* the lady know him by his name so well as we do?" The child was quite breathless.

"What? Do *you* know the name?" asked the man. "Supposing I 'd hit on the right place already. Just take a look under his throat. The owner's name is there."

Jewel fell on her knees, and while Mr. Evringham kept his hand on the dog's muzzle, she pushed aside the silky white fur.

"Evringham. Bel-Air Park, New Jersey," was what she read, engraved on the silver.

She sat still for a minute, overcome, while a procession of ideas crowded after each other through the flaxen head. It was her birthday; grandpa could n't get the boat under the tablecloth. This beautiful dog — this impossibly beautiful dog, was a surprise present. He was for her, to love and to play with; to see his tricks every day, to teach him to know her and to run to her when she called. If she was given the choice of the whole world on this sweet birthday morning, it seemed

to her nothing could be so desirable as this live creature, this playmate, this prince among dogs.

When she looked up the man in the checked suit had disappeared. She glanced at her father and mother. They were watching her smilingly and she understood that they had known.

She looked around a little further and saw Mr. Evringham seated, his hand on the collie's neck, while the wagging, feathery tail expressed great contentment in the touch of a good friend.

At the time the story of the golden dog had so captivated Jewel's imagination, the broker began his search for one in real life. He had already been thinking that a dog would be a good companion for the fearless child's solitary hours in the woods. As soon as the collie was found, he directed that all the ordinary tricks should be taught it, and every day until he left New York he visited the creature, who remembered him so well that on the collie's arrival late last evening, he had feared its joyous barking out at the barn would waken Jewel.

She rose to her knees now, and, putting her arms around the dog's neck, pressed her radiant face against him.

Topaz pulled back, but Mr. Evringham patted him, and in an instant he was freed; for his little mistress jumped up and, climbing into her grandfather's lap, rested her head against his breast.

"Grandpa," she said, slowly and fervently, "I wonder if you do know how much I love you!"

Mr. Evringham patted the collie's head, then took Jewel's hand and placed it with his own on the sleek forehead. The golden eyes met his attentively.

"You 're to take care of her, Topaz. Do you understand?" he asked.

The feathery tail waved harder.

Jewel gazed at the dog. "If anything could be too good to be true, he 'd be it," she said slowly.

Mr. Evringham's pleasure showed in his usually impassive face.

"Well, is n't it a good thing then that nothing is?" he replied, and he kissed her.

CHAPTER XVIII

TRUE DELIGHT

When evening came and put a period to that memorable birthday, Topaz was a dog of experiences. If he was a happy discovery to Jewel, she was none the less one to him. He was delighted to romp in the fields, where his coat vied with the goldenrod; or to scamper up and down the beach, barking excitedly, while his friends jumped or swam through the cool waves.

Jewel was eager that her horse and dog should become acquainted; so, when late in the afternoon Essex Maid and Star were brought out at the customary hour, saddled and bridled, she performed an elaborate introduction between the jet-black picture pony and the prince among dogs. Star arched his neck and shook his wavy mane as he gazed down at the golden dog with his full bright eyes. He had seen Topaz before; for the collie had spent the night in the barn, making sunshine in a shady place as he romped about the man in the checked suit.

"Oh, grandpa!" laughed Jewel, as Star pawed the ground, "he looks at Topaz just the way Essex Maid used to look at him when he first came. Just as *scornful!*"

She knelt down on the grass by the pony, in her riding skirt, and Topaz instantly came near, hopefully. He had already learned that by sticking to her closely

he was liable to have good sport; but this time business awaited him. Mr. Evringham watched the pony and dog, with the flaxen-haired child between them, and wished he had a kodak.

"Now, Star and Topaz, you're going to love one another," said Jewel impressively. "Shake hands, Topaz." She held out her hand and the dog sat down and offered a white paw.

"Good fellow," said the child. "Now I guess you're going to be surprised," she added, looking into his yellow eyes. She turned toward the pony, who was nosing her shoulder, not at all sure that he liked this rival. "Shake hands, Star," she ordered.

It took the pony some time to make up his mind to do this. It usually did. He shook his mane and tossed his head; but Jewel kept patting his slender leg and offering her hand, until, with much gentle pawing and lifting his little hoof higher and higher, he finally rested it in the child's hand, although looking away meanwhile, in mute protest.

"Good Star! Darling Star!" she exclaimed, jumping up and hugging him. "There, Topaz, what do you think of that?" she asked triumphantly. For answer the golden dog yawned profoundly, and Mr. Evringham and Jewel laughed together.

"Such impoliteness!" cried the child.

"You must excuse him if he is a little conceited," said the broker. "He knows Star can't sit up and roll over and jump sticks."

"Oh, grandpa." Jewel's face sobered, for this revived a little difference of opinion between them. "When are you going to let me jump fences?"

"In a few more birthdays, Jewel, a few more," he replied.

She turned back to her pets. "I suppose," she said musingly, "it would n't be the least use to try to make them shake hands with each other."

"I suppose not," returned the broker, and his shoulders shook. "Oh, Jewel, you certainly will make me lose my waist. Here now, time is flying. Mount."

He lowered his hand, Jewel stepped on it and was in her white saddle instantly. The collie barked with loud inquiry and plunged hopefully.

In a minute the horses were off at a good pace. "Come, Topaz!" cried the child, and the golden dog scampered after them with a will.

Harry and Julia took a sail in the "Jewel" while the riders were away, otherwise the four had spent the entire day together; and after dinner they all strolled out of doors to watch the coming of twilight.

Jewel and her father began a romp on the grass with the dog, and Mr. Evringham and Julia took seats on the piazza.

The broker watched the group on the lawn in silence for a minute, and then he spoke.

"I was very much impressed by the talk we had last evening, Julia; more so even than by those that have gone before. Harry really seems very intelligent on this subject of Christian Science."

"He is making a conscientious study of it," returned Julia.

"You have met my questions and objections remarkably well," went on Mr. Evringham. "I am willing and glad to admit truth where I once was skeptical,

and I hope to understand much more. One thing I must say, however, I do object to — it is this worship of Mrs. Eddy. I know you don't call it that, but what does it matter what you call it, when you all give her slavish obedience? I should like to take the truth she has presented and make it more impersonal than you do. What is the need of thinking about her at all?"

Julia smiled. "Well, ordinary gratitude might come in there. Most of us feel that she has led us to the living Christ, and helped us to all we have attained of health and happiness; but one very general mistake that error makes use of to blind people is that Mrs. Eddy exacts this gratitude. How willing everybody is to admit that actions speak louder than words; and yet who of our opposers ever stop to think how Mrs. Eddy's retired, hard-working life proves the falsity of the charges brought against her. She does wish for our love and gratitude; but it is for our sakes, not hers. Think of any of the great teachers from St. Paul down to the present day. Who could benefit by the truth voiced by any of them, while he nursed either contempt or criticism of the personality of the teacher?"

"Yes," returned Mr. Evringham, "there is strength in that consideration; but this blind following of any suggestion your leader makes looks to me too much like giving up your own rationality."

Julia regarded him seriously. "Supposing you were one of a party who had, for long years, searched in vain for gold. You had tried mine after mine only to find you had not the ability to discriminate between the priceless and the worthless ore, or to discern the

signs of promise that lead to rich discovery. Now, supposing another prospector had proved, over and over again, that he did know the places where treasure was to be found. Supposing he had demonstrated, over and over again, that his judgment and discernment never led him astray, and that reward followed his labor unfailingly. Now, what if this wise prospector was willing to help you? Supposing he stated that in certain places, and by certain ways, you could attain that for which you longed and had striven vainly. When his advice or directions came to you, from time to time, do you think you would be likely to stop to haggle or argue over them? No; I think you would hasten to follow his suggestions, as eagerly and as closely as you were able, and with a warmly grateful heart. Would that prospector be forcing you? or doing you a kindness? What are the fruits of Christian Science? What are the results of the directions of this wise, loving leader who can come so close to God that He teaches her to help us to come, too. Oh, father, this obstacle, this foolish argument, meets nearly every one in the path you are treading, and tries to turn him back. I do hope, for your sake, you will decline to give that very flabby error-fairy a backbone, or let it detain you longer. It is marvelous how, without one element of truth or reason, it seems able to hold back so many, and waste their precious time."

Mr. Evringham was regarding the speaker with close attention. "You are a good special pleader," he said, when she paused.

"It is easy to speak the truth," she answered.

He nodded thoughtfully. "You have given me a

new light on the situation. I see it now from an entirely new standpoint."

Here the trio on the lawn came running up the steps, father and child laughing and panting as hard as Topaz, whose tongue and teeth were all in evidence in the gayety of his grin.

Harry threw himself into the hammock, and Jewel sat on the floor beside Topaz, who gazed at her from his wistful eyes, his head on the side. Harry laughed. "Jewel, he looks at you as if he were saying, 'Really, now, you are a person after my own heart.'"

"She is after his heart, too," said Jewel's mother, "and I 'm sure she 'll win it."

"He likes me already," declared the child. "Don't you, Topaz?" she asked tenderly, laying her flaxen head with its big bows against the gold of his coat. "Oh, there ought to be one more story in my book," she added, "one for us to read right now and finish up my birthday."

"Why not have 'The Golden Dog' again?" suggested Mr. Evringham, from the comfortable big wicker chair in which he sat watching Jewel and Topaz. "That would be appropriate."

"Oh, yes," cried the little girl, looking at her mother.

"Oh, no," returned Julia, smiling. "There ought to be a special fresh story for a birthday. We might make one now."

"A new one, mother?" asked Jewel, much pleased. "Could you?"

"No indeed, not alone; but if everybody helped" —

"Oh, yes," cried Jewel, with more enthusiasm than before. "Grandpa begin because he 's the oldest, then

father, then mother, then — well, me, if I can think of anything."

"It 's very wrong of you, Jewel," said the broker, "to remember that I 'm the oldest, under these circumstances. What did you tell me this morning?"

The child's head fell to the side and she leaned toward him. "I don't know how old you are," she replied gently; "and it does n't make any difference."

"Then let 's begin with the youngest," he suggested.

"No," said his daughter, "I think Jewel's plan is the best. You begin, father." She did not in the least expect that he would consent, but Jewel, her hands resting on Topaz's collar, was looking at the broker lovingly.

"Grandpa can do just anything," she declared.

Mr. Evringham regarded her musingly. "I know only one story," he said at last, "and not very far into that one."

"You don't have to know far," returned Julia encouragingly, "for Harry has to begin whenever you say so."

"Indeed!" put in her husband. "I pity you if you have to listen to me."

"It 's my birthday, you know, grandpa," urged Jewel.

"So I 've understood," returned the broker. "Well, just wait a minute till I hitch up Pegasus."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed his son. "You are n't in earnest, Julia? You don't expect me to do anything like that right off the bat!"

"Certainly, I do," she replied, laughing.

"Oh, see here, I have an engagement. We 're one,

you know, and when it comes to authorship, you 're the one."

"Hush," returned Julia, "you 're disturbing father's muse."

But Mr. Evringham's ideas, whatever they were, seemed to be at hand. He settled back in his chair, his elbows on the arms and his finger-tips touching. All his audience immediately gave attention. Even Anna Belle had a chair all to herself and fixed an inspiring gaze on the broker. It was to be hoped that her pride kept her cool, for, in spite of the quiet warmth of the September evening, she was enveloped in her new furs, with her hands tucked luxuriously in the large muff.

"Once upon a time," began Mr. Evringham, "there was an old man. No one had ever told him that it was error to grow old and infirm, and he sometimes felt about ninety, although he was rather younger. He lived in the Valley of Vain Regret. The climate of that region has a bad effect on the heart, and his had shriveled up until it was quite small and mean, and hard and cold, at that.

"The old man was n't poor; he lived in a splendid castle and had plenty of servants to wait on him; but he was the loneliest of creatures. He wanted to be lonely. He did n't like anybody, and all he asked of people was that they stay away from him and only speak to him when he spoke to them, which was n't very often, I assure you. You can easily see that people were willing to stay away from a cross-grained person like that. Everybody in the neighborhood was afraid of him. They shivered when he came near, and ran off to get into the sunshine; so he was used to seeing visitors

pass by the fine grounds of his castle with only a scared glance or two in that direction, and he wished it to be so. But he was very unhappy all the same. His dried-up heart gave him much discomfort, and then once he had read an old parchment that told of a far different land from Vain Regret. In that country was the Castle of True Delight, and many an hour the man spent in restless longing to know how he might find it; for — so he read — if a person could once pass within the portals of that palace, he would never again know sorrow or discontent, but one happy day would follow another in endless variety and satisfaction.

"Many a time the man mounted on a spirited horse and rode forth in search of this castle, and many different paths he took; but every night he came home discouraged, for no sign could he find of any hope or cheer in the whole Valley of Vain Regret, and it seemed to him to hold him like a prisoner.

"One day as he was strolling on the terrace before the castle, in bitter thought, a strange sight met his eyes. A little girl pushed open the great iron gates which he had thought were locked, and walked toward him. For a minute he was too much amazed at such daring to speak, and the little girl came forward, smiling as she caught his look. She had dark eyes and her brown hair curled in her neck. Most people would have remarked her sweet expression; but the old man turned fierce at sight of her.

"'Be off,' he commanded angrily, and he pointed to the gate.

"She did not cease smiling nor turn away, but came straight on.

"The little dried heart in the old man's breast began to bounce about at a great rate in his anger. He turned to a servant who stood near holding in leash two great hounds.

"'Set the dogs on her,' he commanded; and though the servant was loath to obey, he dared not refuse, and set free the dogs who, at the master's word, bounded swiftly toward the child.

"Her loving look did not alter as she saw them coming and she held out her hands to them. When they reached her they licked the little hands with their tongues and bent their great heads to her caresses, and so she advanced to the man, walking between the hounds, a hand on the neck of each.

"He stared at her dumfounded as she stood before him, her eyes smiling up into his. Her garments were white and of a strange fashion.

"'From whence come you?' he asked, when he could speak.

"'From the Heavenly Country,' she answered.

"'And what may be your name?'

"'Purity.'

"'I ordered you out of my grounds!' exclaimed the old man.

"'I did not hear it,' returned the child, unmoved.

"'Don't you fear the dogs?'

"'What is fear?' asked Purity, her eyes wondering.

"'This is the land of Vain Regret,' said the man. 'Be off!'

"'This is a beautiful land,' returned the child.

"For a moment her fearless obstinacy held him silent,

then he thought he would voice the question that was always with him.

"'Have you ever heard, in your country, of the Castle of True Delight?' he asked.

"'Often,' replied the child.

"'I wish to go there,' he declared eagerly.

"'Then why not?' returned Purity.

"'I cannot find the way.'

"'That is a pity,' said the child. 'It is in my country.'

"'And you have seen it?'

"'Oh, many times.'

"'Then you shall show me the way.'

"'Whenever you are ready,' returned Purity. So saying, she passed him, still accompanied by the hounds, and walked up the steps of the castle and passed within and out of sight."

The story-teller paused. Jewel had risen from her seat on the floor and come to sit on a wicker hassock at his feet, and Topaz rapped with his tail as she moved.

"I wish you 'd been there, grandpa, to take care of that little girl," she said earnestly, her eyes fixed on his. "What happened next?"

"Ask your father," was the response.

Harry Evringham rolled over in the hammock where he lay stretched, until he could see his daughter's face. She rose again and pulled her hassock close to him as he continued: —

"As Purity passed into the house, the dogs whined, and the servant calling them, they ran back to him. The

old man stood still, bewildered, for a minute; then he struck his hands together.

"'It is true, then. Even that child has seen it. I will go to her at once, and we will set forth.'

"So the old man entered the castle, and gave orders that the child who had just come in should be found and brought to him.

"The servants immediately flew to do his bidding, but no child could they find.

"'Lock the gates lest she escape,' ordered the master. 'She is here. Find her, or off goes every one of your foolish heads.'

"This was a terrible threat. You may be sure the servants ran hither and thither, and examined every nook and corner; but still no little girl could be found. The master scowled and fumed, but he considered that if he had his servants all beheaded, it would put him to serious inconvenience; so he only sat down and bit his thumbs, and began to try to think up some new way to search for the Castle of True Delight.

"He felt sure the child had told the truth when saying she had beheld it. It was even in the country where she had her home. The man began to see that he had made a mistake not to treat the stranger more civilly. The very dogs that he kept to drive away intruders had been more hospitable than he.

"All at once he had a bright thought. The roc, the oldest and wisest of all birds, lived at the top of the mountain which rose above his castle.

"'She will tell me the way,' he said, 'for she knows the world from its very beginning.'

"So he ordered that they should saddle and bridle

his strongest steed, and up the mountain he rode for many a toilsome hour, until he came to where the roc lived among the clouds.

"She listened civilly to the man's question. 'So you are weary of your life,' she said. 'Many a pilgrim comes to me on the same quest, and I tell them all the same thing. The obstacles to getting away from the Valley of Vain Regret are many, for there is but one road, and that has difficulties innumerable; but the thing that makes escape nearly impossible is the dragon that watches for travelers, and has so many eyes that two of them are always awake. There is one hope, however. If you will examine my wings and make yourself a similar pair, you can fly above the pitfalls and the dragon's nest, and so reach the palace safely.'

"As she said this, the roc slowly stretched her great wings, and the man examined them eagerly, above and below.

"'And in what direction do I fly?' he asked at last.

"'Toward the rising sun,' replied the roc; then her wings closed, her head drooped, and she fell asleep, and no further word could the man get from her.

"He rode home, and for many weeks he labored and made others labor, to build an air-ship that should carry him out of the Valley of Vain Regret. It was finished at last. It was cleverly fashioned, and had wings as broad as the roc's; but on the day when the man finally stepped within it and set it in motion, it carried him only a short distance outside the castle gates, and then sank to the boughs of a tall tree, and, try as he might, the air-ship could not be made to take a longer flight.

"His poor shrunken heart fluttered with rage and

disappointment. 'I will go to the wise hermit,' he said. So he went far through the woods to the hut of the wise hermit, and he told him the same gruesome things about the difficulties that beset the road out of the Valley of Vain Regret, and said that one's only hope lay in tunneling beneath them.

"So the old man hired a large number of miners, and, setting their faces eastward, they burrowed down into the earth, and blasted and dug a way which the man followed, a greater and greater eagerness possessing him with each step of progress; but just when his hopes were highest, the miners broke through into an underground cavern, bottomless and black, from which they all started back, barely in time to save themselves. It was impossible to go farther, and the whole company returned by the way they had come, and the miners were very glad to breathe the air of the upper world again; but the man's disappointment was bitter.

"'It is of no use,' he said, when again he stood on the terrace in front of his castle. 'It is of no use to struggle. I am imprisoned for life in the Valley of Vain Regret.'"

Jewel's father paused. She had listened attentively. Now she turned to her grandfather.

"Is that the way you think the story went, grandpa?"

Mr. Evringham nodded. "I think it did," he replied.

"Then go on, please, father, because I like a lot of happiness in my stories, and I want that man to hurry up and know that — that error is cheating him."

"Your mother to the rescue, then," replied Harry Evringham, smiling.

Jewel turned to look at her mother, and, rising again, picked up her hassock and carried it to the steamer chair in which Mrs. Evringham was reclining.

Her mother looked into her serious eyes and nodded reassuringly as she began: —

"As that sorry old man stood there on the terrace, things had never looked so black to him. He was so tired, so tired of hating. He longed for a thousand things, he knew not what, but he was sure they were to be found at the Castle of True Delight; but he was shut in! There was no way out. As he was thinking these despairing thoughts and looking about on the scenes which had grown hateful to him, he saw something that made him start. The great iron gates leading out of his grounds opened as once before, and a little girl in white garments came in and moved toward him. His heart leaped at the sight, — and it swelled a bit, too!

"Instead of ordering her off, he hurried toward her and, although he scowled in his eagerness, she smiled and lifted dark eyes that beamed lovingly.

"'I cannot find my way to your country nor to the Castle of True Delight,' said the man, 'and I need you to show me. Since you have found your road hither twice, surely you can go back again.'

"'Yes, easily,' replied Purity, 'and since you know that you need me, you are ready, and the King welcomes all.'

"'He will not like me,' said the sorry man, 'because nobody does.'

"'I do,' replied the child; and at her tone the man's heart swelled a little more.

"'There is water in my eyes,' he said, as if to himself. 'What does that mean?'

"'It will make you see better,' replied the child. 'It is the kind of water that softens the heart, and that always improves the sight.'

"'Be it so, then. Perhaps I can better see the way; but the road is full of perils innumerable, child. Have you found some other path?'

"'There is but one,' replied Purity.

"'So the roc said,' declared the man. 'How did you pass the dragon?'

"The child looked up wonderingly. 'I saw no dragon,' she answered.

"The man stared at her. 'There are pitfalls and obstacles innumerable,' he repeated, 'and an ever-wakeful dragon. You passed it in the night, perhaps, and were too small to be observed.'

"'I saw none,' repeated the child.

"'Yet I will risk it!' exclaimed the man. 'Rather death than this life. Wait until I buckle on my sword and order our horses.'

"He turned to go, but the child caught his hand. 'We need no horses,' she said, gently, 'and what would you with a sword?'

"'For our defense.'

"The child pressed his hand softly. 'Those who win to True Delight use only the sword of spirit,' she answered.

"The man frowned at her, but even frowning he wondered. Again came the swelling sensation within his breast, which he could not understand.

"The child smiled upon him and started toward the

heavy gates and the man followed. He wondered at himself, but he followed.

"Emerging into the woodland road, Purity took a path too narrow and devious for a horse to tread, but the man saw that it led toward the rising sun. She seemed perfectly sure of her way, and occasionally turned to look sweetly on the pilgrim whose breast was beginning to quake at thought of the difficulties to come. No defense had he but his two hands, and no guide but this gentle, white-robed child in her ignorant fearlessness. Indeed it was worse than being alone, for he must defend her as well as himself. She was so young and helpless, and she had looked love at him. With this thought the strange water stood again in his eyes and the narrow heart in his bosom swelled yet more.

"The forest thickened and deepened. Sharp thorns sprang forth and at last formed a network before the travelers.

"'You will hurt yourself, Purity!' cried the man. 'Let me go first,' and pushing by the little child, he tried to break the thorny branches and force a way; but his hands were torn in vain; and seeing the hopelessness, after a long struggle, he turned sadly to his guide.

"'I told you!' he said.

"'Yes,' she answered, and the light from her eyes shone upon the tangle. 'On this road, force will avail nothing; but there are a thousand helps for him who treads this path with me.'

"As she spoke, an army of bright-eyed little squirrels came fleetly into the thicket and gnawed down thorns and briers before the pilgrims, until they emerged safely into an open field.

"'A heart full of thanks, little ones,' called Purity after them as they fled.

"'Why did they do that for us?' asked the astonished man.

"'Because they know I love them,' replied the child, and she moved forward lightly beside her companion.

"They had walked for perhaps half an hour when a sound of rushing waters came to their ears, and they soon reached a broad river. There was no bridge and the current was deep and swift.

"The man gazed at the roaring torrent in dismay. 'Oh, child, behold the flood! Even if I could build a raft, we should be carried out to sea, and no swimmer could stem that tide with you in his arms. How ever came you across by yourself?'

"'Love helped me,' answered Purity.

"'Alas, it will not help me,' said the man. 'I know Hate better.'

"'But you are becoming acquainted with Love, else you would not look on me so kindly,' returned the child. 'Have faith and come to the shore.' She put her little hand in his and he held it close, and together they walked to the edge of the rushing river. Suddenly its blackness was touched and twinkling with silver which grew each instant more compact and solid, and, without a moment's hesitation, Purity stepped upon the silver path, drawing with her the man, who marveled to see that countless large fish, with their noses toward the current and their fins working vigorously, were offering their bodies as a buoyant bridge, over which the two passed safely.

"'A thousand thanks, dear ones,' said Purity, as

they reached the farther bank; and instantly there was a breaking and twinkling of the silver, and the rushing water swallowed up the kindly fish.

"The man, speechless with wonder, moved along beside his guide, and from time to time she sang a little song, and as she sang he could feel his heart swelling and there was a strange new happiness born in it, which seemed to answer her song though his lips were mute.

"And then Purity talked to him of her King and of the rich delights which were ever poured out to him who once found the path to the Heavenly Country; and the man listened quite eagerly and humbly and clung to Purity as to his only hope.

"When night fell he feared to close his eyes lest the child slip away from him; but she smiled at his fears.

"'I can never leave you while you want me,' she answered; 'beside, I do not wish to, for I love you. Do you forget that?'

"At this the man lay down quite peacefully. His heart was full and soft, and the strange water that filled his eyes overflowed upon his cheeks.

"In the morning they ate fruits and berries, and pursued their journey, and it was not long before another of the obstacles which the roc and the hermit had foretold threatened to end their pilgrimage. It was a chasm that fell away so steeply and was so deep and wide that, looking into the depths below, the man shuddered and started back. Before he had time to utter his dismay, a large mountain deer appeared noiselessly before the travelers. The man started eagerly, but as the creature's bright, wild gaze met his, it vanished as silently and swiftly as it had come.

"'Ah, why was that?' exclaimed Purity. 'Felt you an unloving thought?'

"'T was a fine deer. Had I but possessed a bow and arrow, I could have taken it!' returned the man, with excitement.

"'To what end?' asked Purity, her wondering eyes sad. 'One does not gain the Heavenly Country by slaying. We must wait now, until Love drives out all else.'

"The repentant man hung his head and looked at the broad chasm. 'Would that I had not willed to kill the creature,' he said, 'for I am loath to lose my own life, and it is less good than the deer's.'

"Purity smiled upon him and slid her hand into his, and again the deer bounded before them, followed this time by its mate.

"The child fondled them. 'Mount upon its back,' she said to the man, indicating the larger animal. He obeyed, though with trembling, while the smaller deer kneeled to the child and she took her seat.

"Then the creatures planted their feet unerringly and stepped to a lower jutting point of rock, from whence with flying leaps they bridged the chasm and scrambled to firm earth on the other side.

"'Our hearts' best thanks, loved ones,' said Purity, as the deer bounded away.

"The man was trembling. 'I have slain many of God's creatures for my pleasure,' he faltered. 'May He forgive me!'

"'If you do so no more you will forgive yourself; but only so,' returned Purity.

"They moved along again and the man spoke ear-

nestly and humbly of the wonders that had befallen them.

"'To Love, all things are possible,' returned the child; 'but to Love only;' and her companion listened to all she said, with a full heart.

"By noon that day, an inaccessible cliff stared the travelers in the face. Its mighty crags bathed their feet in a deep pool, and up, up, for hundreds of feet, ran a smooth wall of rock in which no one might find a foothold.

"The man stared at it in silence, and it seemed to frown back inexorably. His companion watched his face and read its mute hopelessness.

"'Have you still — *still* no faith?' she asked.

"'I cannot see how' — stammered the man.

"'No, you cannot see how — but what does that matter?' asked the child. 'Let us eat now,' and she sat down, and the man with her, and they ate of the fruits and nuts she had gathered along the way and carried in her white gown.

"While they ate, a pair of great eagles circled slowly downward out of the blue sky, nor paused until they had alighted near the travelers.

"'Welcome, dear birds,' said Purity. 'You know well the Heavenly Country, and we seek your help to get there, for we have no wings to fly above those rocky steeps.'

"The eagles nestled their heads within her little hands, in token of obedience, and when she took her seat upon one, the man obeyed her sign and trusted himself upon the outstretched wings of the other.

"Up, up, soared the great birds, over the sullen

pool, up the sheer rock. Up, and still up, with sure and steady flight, until, circling once again, the eagles alighted gently upon a land strewn with flowers.

"The man and his guide stood upon the green earth, and Purity kissed her hands gratefully to the eagles as they circled away and out of sight.

"'This is a beautiful country,' said the man, and he gathered a white flower.

"'Yes,' returned Purity, smiling on him, 'you begin to see it now.'"

Mrs. Evringham paused. Jewel's eyes were fixed on her unwinkingly. "Go on, please, mother," she said.

"I think I 've told enough," replied Mrs. Evringham.

"Oh, but you finish it, mother. You can tell it just beautifully."

"Thank you, dear, but I think it is your turn."

"Yes, Jewel," said her father, "it 's up to you now."

"But I don't think a little girl *can* tell stories to grown-up people."

"Oh, yes, on her birthday she can," returned her father. "Go on, we 're all listening; no one asleep except Topaz."

Jewel's grandfather had been watching her absorbed face all the time, between his half-closed lids. "I think they 've left the hardest part of all to you, Jewel," he said, — "to tell about the dragon."

"Oh, no-o," returned the child scornfully, "that part 's easy."

The broker raised his eyebrows. "Indeed?" he returned.

In honor of her birthday, Jewel was arrayed in her silk dress. The white ribbons, Anna Belle's gift, were billowing out behind her ears. She presented the appearance, as she sat on the wicker hassock, of a person who had had little experience with dragons.

"Well," she said, after a pause, smiling at her grandfather and lifting her shoulders, "shall I try, then?"

"By all means," returned the broker.

So Jewel folded her hands in her silken lap and began in her light, sweet voice: —

"When the man looked around on the flowers and lovely trees and brooks, he said, 'This is a beautiful land.'

"And Purity answered: 'I 'm glad that you see it is. You remember I told you it was.'

"'It was the Valley of Vain Regret we were talking about then,' said the man. 'If you had known more about it, you would n't have called *that* beautiful.'

"Then the little girl smiled because she knew something nice that the man did n't know yet; but he was going to.

"So they journeyed along and journeyed along through pleasant places, and while they walked, Purity told the man about the great King — how loving He was and everything like that, and the man had hold of her hand and listened just as hard as he could, for he felt sure she was telling the truth; and it made him glad, and his heart that had been wizzled up just like a fig, had grown to be as big as — oh, as big as a watermelon; and it was full of nice feelings.

"'I 'm happy, Purity,' he said to the little girl.

"'I 'm glad,' she answered, and she squeezed his hand back again, because she loved him now as much as if he was her grandpa.

"Well, they went along, and along, and at last they came to some woods and a narrow path through them. The man was beginning to think they might need the squirrels again, when suddenly" — Jewel paused and looked around on her auditors whose faces she could barely see in the gathering dusk, — "suddenly the man thought he saw the dragon he had heard so much about; and he shivered and hung back, but Purity walked along and wondered what was the matter with him.

"'There 's the dragon!' he said, in the most *afraid* voice, and he hung back on the girl's hand so hard that she could n't move.

"When she saw how he looked, she patted him. 'I don't see anything,' she said, 'only just lovely woods.'

"'Oh, Purity, come back, come back, we can't go any farther!' said the man, and his eyes kept staring at something among the trees, close by.

"'What do you see?' asked the little girl.

"'A great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns!' answered the man, and he pulled on her again, to go back with him.

"'Dear me,' said Purity, 'is that old make-believe thing around here, trying to cheat you? I 've heard about it.'

"'It would make anybody afraid,' said the man. 'It has seven heads and it could eat us up with any one of them.'

"'Yes, it could, if it was there,' said Purity, 'but there is n't any such thing, to *be* there. The King of the country is all-powerful and He knows we 're coming, and He *wants* us to come. Has n't He taken care of us all the way and helped us over every hard place? Should n't you think you 'd *know* by this time that we 're being taken care of?'

"'Oh, dear!' said the man, 'I shall never see the Heavenly Country, nor the castle, nor know what true delight is; for no one could get by that dragon!'

Purity felt bad because his face was the sorriest that you ever saw, and his voice sounded full of crying. So she put her arms around him. 'Now don't you feel that way;' she said, 'everything is just as happy as it was before. There is n't any dragon there. Tell me where you see him.'

"So the man pointed to the foot of a great tree close by.

"'All right,' said Purity, 'I 'll go and stand right in front of that tree until you get 'way out of the woods, and then I 'll run and catch up with you.'

"The man stooped down and put his arms around the girl just as lovingly as if she was his own little grandchild.

"'I can't do that,' he said; 'I 'd rather the dragon would eat me up than you. You run, Purity, and I 'll stay; and when he tries to catch you, I 'll throw myself in front of him. But kiss me once, dear, because we 've been very happy together.'

"Purity kissed him over and over again because she was so happy about his goodness, and she saw the tears in his eyes, that are the kind that make people see bet-

ter. She *knew* what the man was going to see when he stood up again."

The story-teller paused a moment, but no one spoke, although she looked at each one questioningly; so she continued: —

"Well, he was the most sur*prised* man when he got up and looked around.

"'The dragon has gone!' he said.

"'No, he has n't,' said Purity, and she just hopped up and down, she was so glad. 'He has n't gone, because he was n't there!'

"'He *is n't* there!' said the man, over and over. 'He *is n't* there!' and he looked so happy — oh, as happy as if it was his birthday or something.

"So they walked along out into the sunshine again, and sweeter flowers than ever were growing all around them, and a bird that was near began singing a new song that the man had never heard.

"There was a lovely green mountain ahead of them now. 'Purity,' said the man, for something suddenly came into his head, 'is this the Heavenly Country?'

"'Yes,' said Purity, and she clapped her hands for joy because the man knew it was.

"They walked along and the bird's notes were louder and sweeter. 'I *think*,' said the man softly, 'I think he is singing the song of true delight.'

"'He is,' said Purity.

"So, when they had walked a little farther still, they began to see a splendid castle at the foot of the mountain.

"'Oh,' said the man, just as happily as anything, 'is that home at *last!*'

"'Yes,' said Purity, 'it is the Castle of True Delight.'

"The man felt young and strong and he walked so fast the little girl had to skip along to keep up with him, and the bird flew around their heads and sang 'Love, love, love; *true* delight, *true* delight,' just as *plain*."

Jewel gave the bird-song realistically, then she unclasped her hands. "Mother," she said, turning to Mrs. Evringham, "now you finish the story. Will you?"

"Yes, indeed, I know the rest," returned Mrs. Evringham quietly, and she took up the thread: —

"As the man and Purity drew near to the great gates before the castle, these flew open of their own accord, and the travelers entered. Drawing near the velvet green of the terraces, a curious familiarity in the fair scene suddenly impressed the man. He stared, then frowned, then smiled. A great light streamed across his mind.

"'Purity,' he asked slowly, 'is this my castle?'

"'Yes,' she answered, watching him with eyes full of happiness.

"'And will you live with me here, my precious child?'

"'Always. The great King wills it so.'

"'But what — where — where is the Valley of Vain Regret?'

"Purity shook her head and her clear eyes smiled. 'There is no Valley of Vain Regret,' she answered.

"'But I lived in it,' said the man.

" 'Yes, before you knew the King, our Father. There is no vain regret for the King's child.'

" 'Then I — I, too, am the King's child?' asked the man, his face amazed but radiant, for he began to understand a great many things.

" 'You, too,' returned Purity, and she nestled to him and he held her close while the bird hovered above their heads and sang with clear sweetness, 'Love, love, love; true delight, true, true, *true* delight.' "

The story-teller ceased. Jewel saw that the tale was finished. She jumped up from the hassock and clapped her hands. Then she ran to Mr. Evringham and climbed into his lap. It was so dark now on the veranda that she could scarcely see his face. But he put his arms around her and gathered her to her customary resting place on his shoulder. " Was n't that *lovely*, grandpa? Did you think your story was going to end that way? "

He stroked her flaxen hair in silence for a few seconds before replying, then he answered, rather huskily: —

" I hoped it would, Jewel."